

# THE TURBAN AND THE SWORD OF THE SIKHS

By  
Dr. Trilochan Singh



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## FOREWORD

W. Owen Cole

It may seem impertinent of me, an English Christian to suggest the direction which Sikh studies might take towards the end of the century. However, much has happened since Sikhs came to live in the United Kingdom in appreciable numbers in the nineteen fifties, they are to be found in most of our large cities, one now sits on Her Majesty's bench of Judges and before long one of them, I am sure, will enter Parliament. There can be few Britons now who cannot recognise a Sikh and many children are learning about the Sikh religion in our schools. At a more advanced level conferences, papers, articles and books prompted by the anniversaries of Guru Gobind Singh in 1966 and Guru Nanak in 1969 have provided considerable material for study. If this impetus is to be maintained those tasks need to be accomplished. First, Sikh scholars must explain their beliefs and practices and convey their theology to the Western world. Secondly, they must provide reliable translations of the *Adi Granth* in English and must supply sound commentaries. Thirdly, there is a need for sound English translations of other source materials such as *Janam Sakhis*. If this programme is followed English reading students will be equipped with the necessary information for arriving at their own conclusions.

Of course scholars should learn Punjabi in order to study the Gurmukhi texts but first they must be awakened to the importance of Sikhism as a religion deserving of their attention. When they can appreciate this through the medium of English they will only then take this next step and a Gurmukhi on the lines of Wenham's "Elements of New Testament Greek" will be required. For many young Sikhs born in Britain it is already

necessary, for even if they can read modern Punjabi (for many it is only a spoken language) they cannot understand their own scriptures.

Dr. Trilochan Singh has gone a long way to meet the first need which I listed in his discussion of the symbols of the faith, the rite of Amrit Pahul, initiation, and the theory of the Sword. What is more, he has placed them in a genuine world-context. It is instructive to be shown parallels exist between the Sikh faith and other religions and to have one's attention drawn to the distinctive beliefs.

I am grateful to Dr. Trilochan Singh for this, his latest contribution to Sikh Studies and feel honoured that he should ask me to write a Foreword to it. I wish him strength of body and mind together with resolution of Spirit so that his valuable work may long continue.

W. Owen Cole,

Senior Lecturer, Religious Studies,

Leeds Polytechnic, Leeds

4 October 1976

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to Dr. Trilochan Singh for writing this book for the Sikh Missionary Society U.K. The society had long since felt the need of such a book and had been trying to contact a writer who could accomplish this philosophical and scholarly task.

Dr. Trilochan Singh is a writer of international fame. He has written numerous books on Sikhism, Sikh history, Sikh philosophy and theology. Besides, he has been a UNESCO scholar and a visiting lecturer in many universities in India. Thus recognising his scholarly standing in the international community, the Sikh Missionary Society approached him and commissioned him to write an exposition of the Sikh Baptism and the Sikh Code of Conduct.

Dr. Trilochan Singh conducted his researches into the historical and sacred records of the Sikhs and of other religions which are held in the British Museum, India Office Library and other libraries. With that hard work he produced this book, "The Turban and the Sword of the Sikhs". It gives in detail the exposition of the Sikh Baptism and the symbolic and mystical importance of the Turban and of the Sikh Symbols. He has interpreted Sikh doctrines on a comparative basis which would make it easy for people of other faiths to understand and appreciate the meaning of the Sikh Baptism and the Sikh way of life.

I once again express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Trilochan Singh for devoting his valuable time for writing this book. I am fully confident that the readers will find it informative and inspirational.

Finally I am indebted to the Sangat and numerous donors whose patronage and generosity enable us to publish this and many other books.

Balwant Singh Grewal, Hon. Secretary,  
The Sikh Missionary Society U.K.  
20 Peacock Street, Gravesend, Kent, England.

November 1977.





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## CHAPTER I

### HERITAGE OF THE TURBAN AND THE SWORD

*Once they enter the gates of the inner Court,  
they are to wear linen vestments,  
They shall wear linen turban,  
and linen drawers on their loins.*

Old Testament: Ezekiel 44: 18-19

The name *turban* is found in this form in European languages only: English: *turban, turband*; French: *turban, tulband*; German: *turban*; Italian, Spanish and Portugese: *turbante*; Dutch: *tulband*; Rumanian: *tulipan*; and it is generally traced to the Persian *sarband*. In Turkish *sarik* is the usual name for turban.

It was in the ancient Egyptian civilization that the turban was an ornamental head dress. They called it *pjr* from which perhaps is derived the word *pugree*, so commonly used in India. The Egyptians removed the turban at the time of mourning, a custom which prevailed in the Punjab up to the end of the last century. The Sikh apostle, Bhai Gurdas humorously narrates an incident in his *Vars*, that when an elderly Punjabi came to his house with his turban incidently off, the women folk took it to be a sign of mourning, and started weeping and wailing although no one was dead. The old man's turban, off his head, gave a false alarm.<sup>1</sup>

#### I

#### Turban in Old Testament

*Put on the Turban as the Lord has Commanded Moses:*  
One of the Commands of God to Moses was to wear turban as the symbol of prophethood, holiness and divine power, a command which was obeyed by the Jews and the Muslims for centuries, and ignored or forgotten by the Christians.

*"They made the tunics of fine linen, woven work for Aaron and his sons, the turban of fine linen, the tall head dress and their bands all of fine linen, the drawers of finely woven linen, the sash of woven linen, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

Exodus, 39, 27

*The Turban, the Tunic and the Drawer as the Priestly Vestment:* All these three costumes, the turban, the robe and the drawer continued to be the essential parts of the priestly dress among the Hebrews after the exile. They all have an old independent history, and it is not easy to explain how they came to be combined into an independent priestly uniform:

*"These are the vestments they must make:  
breast plate, ephod, robe, embroidered  
tunic, turban and girdle.*

Exodus: 28-4

*The Turban as Symbol of Dedication, Consecration and Essential for Anointment.* The anointing of men with missionary zeal and prophetic missions required some ceremonial activities like pouring oil and fixing some mark on the turban, which was actually the crown of the priests. In a more refined form these ceremonies have symbolically survived in the Punjab till today.<sup>2</sup>

*They made a rosette of pure gold as the symbol of their holy dedication and inscribed on it as the engraving on a seal, "Holy to the Lord," and they fastened on it a violet brand to fix it on the turban at the top as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

Exodus 39-31

*He then put the turban upon his head and set the gold rosette as a symbol of holy dedication on the front of the turban as the Lord had commanded him. Moses then took the anointing oil, anointed the Tabernacle, and all that was within it and consecrated it.*

Leviticus. 8, 9

*Set the turban on his head, and the symbol of holy dedication on the turban. Take the anointing oil, pour it on his head and anoint him.*

Exodus 29-6

*You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it: "Consecrated to Yahweh as a man engraves a seal." You will secure this to the turban with a ribbon of violet purple, it is to be placed on the front of the turban. The tunic you must weave of fine linen and a girdle, the work of a skilled embroiderer.*

Exodus 28-36

**Kingly Turban:** The turban was the symbol of royalty and was used in place of the crown. It was an article of kingly regalia. Throughout the Islamic world it still continues to be used in place of the crown where monarchy exists.

*For Jerusalem's sake I will speak out,  
Until her right shines forth like the sunrise,  
her deliverance like a blazing torch,  
until the nations see the triumph of your right,  
and all kings see your glory.  
Then you shall be called by a new name,  
Which the Lord will pronounce with his own lips,  
You will be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand,  
a kingly turban in the hand of your God.*

Isaiah, 62, 2-10

**Turban as the Symbol of Stoic Courage in the Face of Grief:** During mourning the people usually took off their turban, but the brave and the holy are neither supposed to weep, nor lament, nor take off their turban. They are to wear the turban as the symbol of stoic courage.

*You are not to lament, not to weep, not to let your tears run down. Groan in silence, do not go into mourning for the dead, knot your turban round your head, put your sandals on your feet, do not cover your beard.*

Ezekiel 24: 17-19

*And you are to do as I have done, you must not cover your beards, or eat common bread; you must keep your turban on your head, put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your beard.*

Ezekiel 24: 17-19, 23-24

*The Turban as Symbol of Dignity and Self-Respect.* The turban, during the Biblical world, as it is among the Indians and Arabs who wear it, was a symbol of dignity, self-respect and authority. A blemish on the turban meant a blot on one's character; so was it during the time of Old Testament prophets, and so it is now among the Sikhs and Arabs. An insult to the turban meant an unbearable insult to one's personality. To take away the turban meant an unbearable insult to one's personality. To take away the turban meant subjugating a person and humiliating him. During Freedom Movement Sikh prisoners were forced to wear caps which they refused. "When God takes away the turban," says Prophet Isaiah, "he takes away the dignity of man."

*That day the Lord will take away the ankle ornaments, tiaras, pendants and bracelets and veils, the expensive dresses, mantles, cloaks and purses, the mirror, linen garments, turban and mantles.*

Isaiah 3: 22, 23

*For Babylonians Turban was Symbol of Youth and Strength:* The turban and beard gave them such attractive personality that women who had not seen them were infatuated by their personality:

*"No sooner had she seen wall engravings of men, paintings of Chaldeans, coloured vermillion, men with sashes round their waists, and elaborate turbans on their heads, all so imperious of bearing portraits of Babylonians from Chaldea, than she fell in love with them at first sight and sent messengers to them in Chaldea.*

*Belts were round their waists and on their heads turbans with dangling ends; All seemed to be high officers and looked like Babylonian natives of Chaldea.*

Ezekiel 23: 14-17

*Turban as Symbol of Justice and Charity:* When Job surveys his life and protests his innocence, he recounts the good he did during his days of prosperity. He identifies the turban with righteousness and uses it as a metaphor for justice, charity and kingly dignity.

*I had dressed myself in righteousness like a garment,  
justice for me was a cloak and turban,  
I was eyes for the blind,  
and feet for the lame.*

Job: 29: 14

*Turban as Symbol of Purity:* Filthy garments were sign of slavery and humiliation. For Joshua filthy garments were sign of captivity, exile, misery, physical humiliation and harm. Filthy garments also represent sin of the people.

*Now Joshua was dressed in dirty clothes as he stood before the angel of God. The angel said these words to those who stood before him: "Take off his dirty clothes, clothe him in splendid robes of state and put a clean turban on his head. They clothed him in splendid robes of State and put a clean turban on his head. The angel said, "I have taken away your iniquity from you.*

Zachariah 3: 4.9

*He shall wear a sacred linen tunic and a linen drawer to cover himself and he shall put on a linen sash around his waist and wind a linen turban round his head and these are sacred vestments and he shall bathe before putting them on.*

Leviticus 8: 9

Thus a clean body, a clean white turban were pre-requisites for spiritual development of a clean mind and pure soul.

## II

### Turban in Islam

In Arabia, the pre-Muslim Bedouins are said to have worn turbans, and it has been supposed that the high cap is the Persian and cloth wound round it the true Arabic element of the turban.<sup>2</sup>

"In Islam, in course of time, the turban has developed a three-fold significance, one natural for the Arabs, one religious for the Muslims and one professional for civil professions later divided into religious and administrative offices (*wazūf diniya wa-dīwaniya*)."

Many details about Prophet Mohammed's turban have been handed down by tradition. According to the belief recorded in later *hadith*, the turban signified "dignity for the believer and strength for the Arab, *wakar li 'l-Muslim wa-'izz li 'l-Arab*. Prophet Mohammed is to them the owner of the turban par-excellence (*sahib al imamu*). The makers of turbans in Turkey have actually chosen Prophet Mohammed as their patron saint, for he is said to have traded in turbans in Syria before his call and to have exported them from Mecca to Basra. (Ewliya, i 590). According to one *hadith* Adam is said to have worn turban which Gabriel wound round his head on his expulsion from Paradise."

"A much quoted *hadith* runs, "*turbans are the crowns of the Arabs*," which is explained to mean that Arabs wear turbans as Persians wear crowns, so that the turban would be a national badge of the Arabs as crown is of the Persians. A similar *hadith* runs, "wear turbans and thus be different from earlier people." Still more numerous are the *hadith* which describe the turban as the badge of Muslims to distinguish them from the unbelievers; the distinction between them and the believer is the turban." There is a prophecy which says, "my community will never decay so long as they wear turbans." "On the day of judgement a man will receive light for every winding of the turban (*kawai*) round his head. Thus to put on the turban means to adopt Islam. Nevertheless, the stage was



never reached where it was a bounden duty (*farz*) to wear a turban; it is however recommended and the general recommendation runs to wear turban and increase nobility. Especially at *Salat* and on going to the mosque or tombs is the wearing of the turban recommended and it is said two *raka's* or (one *raka'* or the *salat*) with a turban are better than seventy without; for it is not proper to appear before one's king with head uncovered. It is also written that "God and angels bless him who wears a turban on Fridays."

"Earlier history shows that in some places only believers were supposed to wear turbans; the unbelievers could wear only caps. In earlier times unbelievers were ordered to wear turbans of different colour and with some distinguishing marks. Omar I is said to have forbidden Christians from wearing turbans or dress resembling Muslims (Tritton J.R.A.S., 1927). At one time Christians were forbidden to wear red turban, while at another time anyone who wore white turban was punished with death." In Egypt and Syria in the eighth century A. H. Christians wore blue, Jews yellow and samira red turbans. The Ottomans wore white turbans. Unbelievers were allowed red, Jews and Christians could wear blue. The commonest colour among the Muslims is white turban. The Prophet is said to have been fond of this colour and it is the colour of Paradise. The angels who helped the believers at Badr are said to have worn white turban. The prophet is first said to have liked the yellow colour, but later forbade it.

Prophet Mohammed is said to have worn a black cloak and black turban on entering Mecca and at the address at the gate of *Ka'aba*. In black there is said to be subtle allusion to sovereignty and besides, black is the foundation of all colours. The Abbasids claimed that the black turban of the Prophet worn at the entry to Mecca had been handed down to them, and in a tendentious *hadith* in which Gabriel prophesied the coming of the Abbasids, he, of course, wears a black turban.

"Prophet Mohammed is said to have at first liked to wear blue turbans but he forbade it because the Unbelievers, Jews and Christians wore it. The so-called *Kitrya* turban which the Prophet wore is also said to have been of red colour. Green

turban and colour became well known badges of the descendants of Mohammed. Tradition is unanimous that the Prophet never wore green turban. Green turban as the badge of the Sharifs is of much later origin."

Ibn al Zubair wore black turbans and cloaks. Saynute wrote a whole book on the importance of black cloak and turbans. In the Sikh scriptures we find that the *Shlokas* of Sheikh Farid clearly indicate that the Chisti Sufis wore black cloaks and turbans:

*Sayeth Farid: Black is my Sufi garb,  
Black is the cloak I wear,  
Full of sin and vice is my heart,  
Though people call me a dervish.*

*Adi Granth Shloka 61*

*Sayeth Farid: I am always worried about my turban,  
Lest it be soiled with dirt,  
My foolish mind realizes not,  
My very head will be in dust.*

*Adi Granth, Shloka 26*

The first *shloka* indicates that the Sufi dervishes of Chisti Order wore black cloaks and black turbans and the second *shloka* indicates that in the Punjabi society of Sheikh Farid's times (13th Century) turban was the symbol of social status.

There was positive discipline and regulations about the wearing of turbans among the Muslims known as *Adab-i-Dastar*. The following are the most important rules:

1. A boy should be given turban when he reaches maturity at the age of 7 to 10 years.
2. How should the turban be wound by a Muslim? The answer is as the Prophet did it. It should be wound standing (while trousers are put on, sitting).
3. A new turban should be put on Friday and the Wearer should utter *Bismilla* at the time of wearing it.
4. Gold and silver ornaments should not be put on the turban.

The turban has acquired considerable significance as a symbol of investiture since there is no crown or coronation proper as symbols of sovereignty in the Muslim sense.

"The prototype again is an act of Mohammed. He is said to have put a turban on Ali at the pond of Khuma and again when in Ramadan of the year 10; he appointed him governor of the Yemen. The Prophet is next said to have wound the turban on every governor in order to teach him the manners and to give him the dignity. Following this example the Caliphs, the successors of the Prophet, put the turban on the vazier and later Sultans."

"The turban is also essential feature of the robe of honour (*khilat*) which Muslim rulers used to bestow upon their *vaziers* and *amirs*. In the Middle East the Christian Patriarch also had a larger and more regularly shaped turban than the other priests. The turbans of the dead Sultan were kept in the tomb. Fesquet says, that the secretaries wore high turbans with windings, merchants and artificers loose and broad, and slaves very small."<sup>1</sup>

Pirzada Muhammed Husain writes, "Even when the Arabs became totally Persianized they never relinquished their national head dress. The rulers followed the subjects and the Persian and Turkish sovereigns themselves with few exceptions imitated the Arabs in this respect. In place of the crown therefore, the Mohammedan sovereigns, with rare exception, have always used a turban girdled with a jewelled band (*sarpechi*) and studded with a jewelled crest. But the Mohammedan sovereigns of India have always used golden and jewelled umbrellas (*chhattar*) which they borrowed from their adopted country."

### III

#### The Indian Turban

The Encyclopaedia Britannica states, "What is known in Europe as a turban (from Persian, *sarband*) is in India divided into two classes. The first made of a single piece of cloth 20 to 30 inches wide and from 6 to 9 yards long, is bound round the head from right to left or from left to right, in-

differently and quite simply so as to form narrow angles over the forehead and back. This form is called *amamah* (Arabic) and *dastar* in Persian. It is also called *shamla*, *safa*, *lungi*, *sela*. The term *amamah* and *dastar* are used chiefly with reference to turbans of priests and *uleman* that is the learned and religious persons. They are usually white. Formerly Sayyids wore *dastars* of green colour.

"The *lungi* is made of cloth of special kind manufactured in Ludhiana. It is generally blue and has ornamental border. The *sela* is grander and more ornamental. Generally it is worn by the wealthier and nobler classes. (The *lungi* and *sela* were generally manufactured by Muslim weavers, who have migrated to Pakistan after the partition of the country).

"The second form of the turban is known as *pagri* (Englishized by Anglo Indians as *puggaree* or *pugree*), which is worn by the Sikhs and the Muslims. It is a single piece of cloth, 6 to 8 inches wide and of any length. The method of binding the *pagri* are innumerable, each method having a distinctive name as: *arabi* (Arab fashion), *mansabi* (official fashion), *mushaiki* (Sheikh fashion), *chakridar* (worn by *hajjis*), *khurkidar* (fashion of piling the cloth high adopted by retainers of great men), *latudar* (top shaped) worn by *kayashuth* or *munshis* and writers), *joridar* (cloth twisted into rope shape); *siprali* (shield-shaped worn by shia sect), *murassa* or *nastalikh* (ornately bound), *latapati* (carelessly bound). The *chira* is a *pagri* of checked cloth. It is worn by nobles and persons of distinction."<sup>5</sup>

The eminent linguist and philosopher, Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, National Professor of India in Humanities, in his recently published book, *Angla-Nibandha-Chayana*, "Select Papers" writes, "The basic head dress (of the Indians) is the turban which is a piece of cloth of varying length, wound round the head in different styles. Ancient Indian turbans, as in sculptures and paintings, were sometimes quite elaborate. A very popular type which we find in the oldest Indian sculptures as in Barhut and in Sanchi, and in the earliest Ajanta paintings has a round knob in front. Various turban designs

are found in ancient and medieval Indian art. Professor Hermann Goetz, the eminent German Indologist and historian has shown how the Mughal court was largely based on the earlier Rajput court dress and the Mughal turban which we find on the heads of the Mughal emperors in paintings is definitely of Indian origin. This Mughal style turban is going out of use, and in a modified form it survived in the head dress of the princes of the ruling families of Hyderabad State."

The Bengali turban we still see in pictures — it was rather voluminous and was something like a big wheel round the head. A representation of it we find in pictures of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and in the traditional figures of god Kartikeya or Skanda in Durga image groups. This was simplified to a made-up cap-turban which professional men, lawyers and doctors — during the latter part of the last century used to wear."

"The Maratha turban was of various sorts, a very heavy one which we see in pictures of the Maratha army under the Peshwas, and the small, elegant turban generally made of vivid red silk with a splash of gold embroidery at the top. But now alas, this has degenerated into a made-up turban cap. The South Indian turban is a simple affair generally white in colour, small in shape with a splash of gold embroidery from one end to the other above the brow."

"The Pathan turban is an elegant affair — it is rather slight in its form, lightly wound round a tall conical embroidered cap either red or green or some other colour, with a scarf end floating like a feather at the top. But the most popular form of turban latterly among the aristocracy all over India was the Rajput *safa*. This was of very vivid colours like the Sikh turban, generally of fine muslin, dyed in Jaipur or Bikaner in various colours and gracefully tied round the head with one ear covered with a fringe shown at the top."

"There is the Marwari Bania or merchant turban (which also used to be worn by the Rajputs in early days) which consists of very fine and long string of cloth, generally yellow

or saffron in colour, wound in many folds above the head and looking like an elaborate skull cap. There were various types of other turbans which have gradually given place to caps imitating them, eg. Parsi turban and the turban (generally white) resembling the Maharashtrian and the Marwari, which is worn by Matbial Brahmins (now made into a cap-turban). Similarly the Bohra and other Muslim communities of the Western India wear a kind of round made-up cap-turban covered with gold lace. There are various terms in different parts of India for these types of turbans, eg; *pay*, *pagdi*, *bida*, *muretha* (Sanskrit *munda-vesta*; that which is worn around the head), and there are names in the Dravidian languages as well.”

The turban of the Sikhs is not merely a head-dress. It is inseparably connected with Sikh Baptism and the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehat*). In Sikh history the types of turbans have been changing, but the fundamental principles governing the wearing of the turban have never changed. We find the Pathan type of turban worn by Guru Nanak, in the oldest and historically correct painting of the Guru, (now preserved in Ram Rai's dera, Dehradun). From the time of the fifth Guru, the Rajput style, which was adopted by the Mughal courts was adopted. During the Misal period, the Afghan style in a modified form became popular among the Sikh Chiefs, while Saints and Seers went on wearing the Rajput style or the Sufi style with certain modifications. The Nihangs, (a warrior group) have developed their distinct style which is a slightly changed form of the medieval Sikh style.

While there are no hard and fast rules about wearing the Sikh turban, even in the different modern styles developed by the romantic vagaries of young men, all Sikhs observe certain principles, that the head should be gracefully covered, that the turban should reflect smartness, grace and dignity, and that it should never be treated as a cap-turban. White, blue, yellow are the most popular colours amongst religious people and divines, while all other shades are worn by young men according to their tastes. We shall discuss separately the fundamental relation of the turban to Sikh baptism in a separate chapter.

## IV

### Heritage of the Sword

*For the Lord accepts the service of the people,  
he crowns his humble folk with victory,  
Let his faithful servant exult in triumph,  
let them shout for joy as they kneel before him.  
Let the high praises of God be on their lips,  
and two-edged Sword in their hands.*

Old Testament: Psalms 149, 3-6

The generic term for the Sword in Europe appears to be common: The various names are: Scandanavian—*svard*, Icelandic—*sverd*, Danish—*svaerd*, Anglo-saxon—*sweard* and *snerd*, Old German—*svert*, now *schwert*, Old English and Scotch—*sword*, now *sword*. In Egyptian *sf*, *safi*, *sayf*, *sfet* and *Emself*. *Saif* is common word both in Persian and Punjabi. The word *scimitar* is from the Persian word *shamsheer*, very common in the Punjabi language.

"The history of the sword," says Richard Burton, "is the history of humanity. The white Arm means more than the oldest, the most varied of weapons, the only one which has lived through all times. He, she, it — for gender of the sword varies, has been worshipped with priestly sacrifices as a present god."<sup>7</sup>

"At a higher plane the sword has been idealized as divine power. At the lower plane the sword became the favourite arm of gods and demigods; a gift of magic and one of the treasures sent down from heaven, which made *Malik Kabir*, the great King divine. It was consecrated to the dieties and was stored in the temples and the Church. It was the key to heaven and hell and the saying is that, "if there were no sword there would be no law of Mohammed, and a Muslim warrior's highest title was *Saif-Ullah*, Sword of God. Prophet Mohammed says, "Permission has been given to them who fight because they have been wronged and verily God to help them has the might. "They are those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly only because they affirmed: Our Lord is Allah. If Allah did not repel the aggression of some people

by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated, would surely be destroyed. Allah will surely help him who helps His cause." (Koran 22-40). One *hadith* says, "If men did not fight for the protection of the churches and faith, places of worship would be destroyed."<sup>3</sup>

In human history the sword became an abstraction as well as Personage endowed with human as well as superhuman qualities. The sword became a sentient being, a divine deity. It is even identified with the Word of God:

*For the Word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the place where life and spirit, joint and marrow divides. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the heart. There is nothing in creation that can hide from him; everything is naked and exposed to the eye of the One with whom we have to reckon.*

Hebrew 4-12

There is a metaphorical use of the sword when in the Revelation it is said, "And out of his mouth came a sharp *two-edged sword* and his face shone like the sun in full strength." Commenting on this Swedenborg says, "By *Sword* nothing else is signified but truth fighting against falsehood and destroying it. The sword is here, a symbol of judicial authority . . ."

*For Sword take that which the spirit justifies, the Words that come from God.*

Ephesians 6, 17

*You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth, I have not come to bring peace but a Sword.*

Matthew 10: 35

*Jeremiah, the prophet of God then stretched out his hand and presented Judas with a golden sword saying as he gave it, "Take this holy Sword as a gift from God, with it you shall strike down the enemies.*

Maccabees 15-15



*For my sword has drunk deep in heavens. See how it slashes through Edom, through the people I have condemned to be punished.*

Isaiah: 34, 35

Bishop Philip Brooks in one of his sermons, "*The Sword Bathed in Heaven*," comments on these sayings from the Bible and says: "The good moves against the evil and must, in the end, destroy it. It is vehement, impetuous and fiery in movement, but it is abstract. God is about to smite the wickedness of the earth. His sword is in His Hands, and then, as a part of the terrible announcement, there comes these words: "My sword shall be bathed in heaven." It means that the instruments of righteousness upon the earth must be the same with the means and instruments of righteousness in heavens."

"In no part of His universe can God be passive. Everywhere He must be the foe of the evil and the friend of the good. Everywhere therefore throughout the great perplexed tumultuous universe, we can see the flashing of His sword. "His sword!" we say, and that must mean His nature uttering itself in His own form of force. Nothing can be His sword which is not in His nature. And so the sword of God in heavenly regions must mean perfect thoroughness and perfect justice contending against evil and self-will, and bringing about everywhere the ultimate victory of righteousness and truth. God could not and would not fight otherwise than as God; and there would be no mere favouritism, nor any tolerance of means and methods which were undivine. That every struggle of the people of God against evil in this world must be fired with eternal principles, must be instinct with thoroughness and with justice; that is the meaning of the word of God to Isaiah which declared, "My sword is bathed in heaven." "It is the truth that all the true battles of the earth really are God's battles and are to be fought only in God's spirit and God's way. To strike for absolute truth, to tolerate no falsehood, however useful for the time it seems, that is not possible unless the man counts his fight God's fight and despises any method which is not worthy of God."

"To surrender the sword was submission, to break the

sword was degradation. To kiss the sword was and in places still is the highest form of oath and homage. The sword killed and cured; the hero when helpless fell upon his sword; and the heroines like Lucretia and Calpurnia used the blade standing. The sword cut the gordian knot of every difficulty. The sword was the symbol of justice and of martyrdom and accompanied the wearer to the grave. "Lay on my coffin a sword, said the German poet Henrich Hein for I have warred daughtily to win freedom for mankind."<sup>10</sup>

"From days immemorial the Sword is the Queen of weapons, a creator as well as destroyer, carved out history, formed the nations, and shaped the world. She decided the Alexandrine and Caesarian victories which opened new prospects to human ken. She diffused everywhere the bright light and splendid benefits of war and conquest, whose functions are all important in the formative and progressive process. The sword was carried by and before the Kings and the bands, not the sceptre, noted as their seals of state. As the firm friend of the crown and the ermic robe, it became the second fountain of honour. Among the ancient Germans even the judges sat armed on the judgement seat, and at the marriages it represented the bridegroom in absence. Noble and ennobling its touch upon the shoulder conferred the prize of knighthood. Its presence was a moral lesson. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans and the Hebrews, Western and Southern Europe, during its chivalrous ages, appeared nowhere and on no occasion without the sword. It was ever ready to leap from its sheath in the cause of weakness, and at the call of Honour. Hence with its arrogant individuality, the sword still remained the all sufficient type and token of high sentiments and the higher tendencies of human nature."

"In society the position of the sword was remarkable. Its aspect was brilliant, its manner was courtly, its habits were punctilious, and its connections were patricians. It bore itself as haughty victor, an arbitrator and necessarily there were times when its superlative qualities showed corresponding defects. Handled by the vile, it too often became in the

"syllogism of violence"; an incubus, a blusterer, a bully, a tyrant, a murderer, an assassin; under such conditions it was corruption at its best. But its lapses were individual and transient, its benefits to humanity general and enduring."<sup>11</sup>

In ancient Hindu period of Indian history four types of weapons were recognized:

1. *Yantra-mukta* (thrown by the machine)
2. *Panni-mukta* (thrown by the hand)
3. *Mukta-Sandharita* (thrown and drawn back)
4. *Mantra mukta* (thrown by magic spell)

Out of these four classes the sword belongs to the second category and is known in classical Sanskrit literature as *khadag*. *As* or *Asi*, the name repeatedly used by Guru Gobind Singh in his writings. The *khadag* has a total of nine names: it is carried on the left side and is handled in thirty-two ways. A section of the Sanskrit classic *Nitiprakasha* (Book III) is entirely devoted to *khadag*. Among the four arts to be studied besides *Kama Shastra* (*Arts Amoris*) women are enjoined by Sage Vatsya (Part I, p26) to practise with the sword, single stick quarter staff, bow and arrow. Among the types quite popular were *Asidhenu* (Sister of sword-dagger) and *Mustika* (list sword). The Roman *Ensis* is generally classified with the Sanskrit *Asi* and the Zend *Anh*.<sup>12</sup>

He who understands the historical exposition of the sword just given can truly appreciate the Sword of the Sikhs. To the Sikhs the sword embodies "the Religion of Honour," the first step to the "Religion of Humanity." In the Knightly hands of the Khalsa, the sword acknowledged no Fate but that of freedom and free-will and it bred the very spirit of Chivalry, a keen personal sentiment of self-respect, of dignity and of loyalty, with the noble desire to protect weakness against the abuse of strength. The Knightly sword of the Khalsa was ever the representative idea, the present and eternal symbol of all that men most prized — divine wisdom, which destroys relentlessly the secret fears and darkness of the heart. It is the symbol of courage which dispels all fears, and of freedom which does not acknowledge any social, political and cultural bon-

dage. The sword for the Sikhs is, "the best friend in defence of his freedom and faith, the worst foe of perfidy. It is the symbol of his political and spiritual rights, the tone of the Guru's commandments. It is the outward and visible sign of his spirit of martyrdom, his unshakeable determination to live and die for truth and justice, and to oppose and fight all oppression and tyranny. We shall discuss all aspects of the Sword which the Gurus gave to the Sikhs as part of their ethical, social and spiritual life in a separate chapter entitled "*The Sword of Guru Gobind Singh.*"

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**Special Note:** All quotations from The Bible are from: (1) The New English Bible Translation prepared under the direction of 12 Churches and Published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press in 1970. (2) The Jerusalem Bible (copyright 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd.).

## CHAPTER 2

### SIKH BAPTISM: ORIGIN, HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION

*If you yearn to play the game of Love,  
Carry your head on the palm of your hand.  
Then, enter the path of my Faith;  
If on this path you tread,  
Hesitate not to sacrifice your head.*

Guru Nanak: *Shloka Vadhik* 20

*In this dark age, Guru Nanak revealed,  
God the Supreme Being is one and no other;  
He initiated his disciples with chammamrit:  
Water sanctified by the touch of his lotus feet,  
And gave a new code of conduct,  
As the high Way of spiritual life.  
Thus Guru Nanak gave to dharma, its lost feet:  
He blended all classes and creeds into one: the Sikhs;  
He gave the lowliest, social equality with the kings.  
He taught humility to all the world.*

Bhai Gurdas Var I, 24

'A sacrament is a significant deed, a particular use of temporal things which gives to them the value of eternal things, and thus conveys spiritual reality.' The sacraments in higher religions belong to the order of signs and symbols. They manifest something more than themselves, something hidden. Indeed, a sacrament is at once something visible and something hidden. "The Latin word *sacramentum* is the normal translation of the Greek, *mysterion*, or mystery. In every sacrament there is a sign of grace made in the soul, a fulfilment in the seeker's path to spiritual progress."<sup>1</sup> "A sacrament is a symbol of binding compact within the sanctuary of the soul: a covenant be-

tween the inner Divine soul and the outer advanced qualities, whereby they may be consciously raised to higher efficiency and purity.”<sup>2</sup>

“The bread in the hands of Jesus becomes his ‘body’ and the wine in the cup which he holds becomes spiritual Elixir, powerful enough to remove sins. The bread is the bread of heaven, the Spirit of truth and Goodness. The ‘wine’ is his ‘blood’ his resplendent Spirit. The ‘cup’ and the ‘wine’ signify respectively the soul and life — the psychic receptacle for the Spirit and the vivifying Spirit itself. Through such sacramental grace the soul becomes conscious of its destiny and yearns for instructions in Truth, that it may progress the faster.”<sup>3</sup>

Action and contemplation must act upon each other, otherwise our actions will have no soul and our thoughts no body. This is the great Truth which the higher religions express in their sacraments. A sacrament is more than a symbol. The perception of the symbols leads us from the many to the One, from the transitory to the permanent, but not from appearance to reality. This belongs to the sacramental experience which is symbolism retranslating itself into concrete action and to mundane interest.”<sup>4</sup>

In the religious symbols of sacraments it is not the symbols that are venerated but that which is revealed through them. Religious symbols always function within a living texture. Symbolism of the sacraments can be understood only in the context of their theological and mystical interpretation. Guru Nanak, the Founder of Sikh Religion, made three sacraments the rock foundation of the Sikh Church. (1) *Karah Prashad* (2) *Langar* or *Degh* (3) *Baptism* or *Charan-Pahul Amrit*.

Sikh Sacraments, other than Baptism, are a part of daily worship, and congregational acts of piety, prayer and charity. The devotee seeks the Eternal in the temporal through active involvements in these sacraments, which help him in his spiritual search and develop in him the noble virtues of charity, humility, and reverence for humanity at large. While Baptism as sacrament is open only to the initiate, the other two sacraments are open for participation to men of all faiths, all races, and all nations. The Sikh sacraments have been so woven into

the fabric of their life of worship and prayer, that they have become a part of their character and daily moral life. The dangers of formalism and exteriorization are always there and as money is involved in sacramental offerings, the greedy and selfish people may slide down into crass materialism, and use the Sikh shrines as means of material gains, as is being done in many places. But for the serious seeker, and the pious devotee these sacraments are full of deep mystery and meaning, helping to reach the suprasensible through the sensible. It is only morally and spiritually blind people who ignore these patent facts, and fail to see deeper bonds between matter and spirit, between the seen and the unseen, and between nature and grace. God has created some of the fundamental physical and mental foods without which no human being can live as a moral and spiritual being; and in true worship, these fundamental elements of our physical and moral life become vehicles of spiritual experiences. The ultimate aim of these sacraments is to inculcate charity, fellowship and fraternal associations amongst human beings and make the love and worship of God a daily and living practice.

Besides Baptism, *karah-prashad* and *langar* are the two main offerings. Guru Gobind Singh coined the word, "*Degh*" lit: "Cauldron" for both of them, to rhyme with *Tegh* (Sword). Both these words *Degh* and *Tegh* had symbolic meanings in the royal seals of Guru Gobind Singh, used later by the Khalsa.

## II

### Sacrament of Karahprashad

The word *prashad* means the gift of the Guru's grace. The sacramental offering which is offered in the Sikh temples by the devotees, and distributed after the congregational prayer among all present in the congregation, irrespective of their nationality, creed, caste or colour, is known as *karah prashad*, the literal meaning of which is sacramental super-substantial food prepared in an iron cauldron, *karaha*. It was, as Bhai Gurdas tells us, originally known as *Mahaprashad*,<sup>1</sup> the supreme super-substantial sacramental offering. Bhai Gurdas also calls it

*Panc-amrit* (Ambrosial food with five ingredients. The five ingredients, are water, flour, clarified butter (ghee), sugar, and fire.<sup>6</sup> It is the recitation of the holy hymns, and the congregational prayer of offering, which make it ambrosial (*amrit*) otherwise, it remains the common *halwa*. These are the ingredients of the best that is in human food all over the civilized world, and people of no nationality or creed can ever have any objection to it when it is offered to them in the temple. To these five elements is added the essential spiritual ingredient which consists of the prayer (*Japji*) which is read while preparing it, and the congregational prayer in which the last words generally are, "May he who eats the *prashad*, (the sacramental offerings) O Guru, go contented and blessed."

The *karah prashad* is not offered to all present in the congregation to appease their physical hunger. As it is to be equally distributed to all, the quantity offered is generally small. It is a symbolic offering from the devotee to the Guru, and from the Guru back to all the devotees present in the congregation, and it has two-fold meaning. To the devotee the symbolic meaning is that a Sikh must offer at least some small part of his earnings to the Guru for charity and service of humanity. As even a pound of *prashad* worth a rupee and quarter, offered by the devotee, reaches many people when distributed in extremely small quantity, it is symbolic of the fact that true charity is to offer whatever we can for the service of others without expecting anything in return from them, and without even knowing who are the individuals served through such charity. Its symbolic meaning from the point of view of the Guru, in whose name it is offered, is different. The Sikh scriptures and historical traditions are full of the theme that the heart of the humble and poor man is the haven of the Guru's spirit. What is offered to the poor and the destitute, to lessen their suffering, reaches the Guru and God, the Indwelling Spirit of all humanity. Bhai Chaupa Singh, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh in his *Rehatnama* says, "*Guru ka Sikh garib ki rasna ko Guru ki golak janai*." A Sikh should consider the mouth of a poor man to be the treasure chest of the



Guru. Who ever feeds and clothes the poor and helps to share his earnings with the needy is blessed by the Lord. On him descends the grace and love of God. Thus the *karah-prashad* is symbolic of the devotee's love and obedience to all that the Guru stands for, and for the Guru's grace on all human beings.

### III

#### The Sacrament of Langar (Feeding Everyone)

The community kitchen in the medieval Sufi *khanqas* was known as the *langar*. The word *langar* in Persian means: (1) an anchor; a stay or rope for the tent. (2) the bouse or monastery of the Sufi *dervishes* (3) an alms-house. The Sikh Gurus established this institution as a major part of the Sikh temples, and it became a very important sacrament of the Sikh Church which has the inner process of germination of the spirit of Sikh charity and spirituality, and it is on the efficiency of the *langars*, in all their aspects that the strength, self-sufficiency and progress of the Sikh Church has always depended. There are two types of *langars* which are attached to all major Sikh temples.

(a) *Langar of Daily Meals*. *Langar* (free kitchen or open alms house) attached to most of the important Sikh temples offers two square meals to every visitor, rich or poor, and more so to the destitute and the homeless, the travellers and pilgrims. When President Nasser of Egypt visited the Golden Temple, he was so deeply impressed by the unique sight of the Kashmiri Muslims, Tibetans, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, the rich and the extremely poor with tattered clothes sitting as equals in the Langer Hall of the Golden Temple, that he and his party left all the money they carried as donation for the Guru's free kitchen. It is a sin for a Sikh to question a man's faith and creed before offering him a seat in the community kitchen. It is open to all human beings of all nationalities, and all peoples of all countries. The rich and the poor, the black and white people, the Hindus, Muslims and Christians all sit in a row and eat to their fill the food that is prepared. In the *Adi Granth*, the Bards, Rai Balwand and Satta, record how Guru Angad's wife, Khivi, distributed food in the *langar*, with her own hands.

and how she took care to see that the food was properly prepared and delicious. Milk pudding mixed with clarified butter was distributed by her in the *langar*, a delicacy which the poor man could not afford. It is also recorded in Bhai Mani Singh's *Bhagatmal* that the food taken by Guru Angad was much simpler than this.<sup>8</sup> Even when individual devout Sikhs are asked for food, shelter, or any help in the name of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh, they dare not say no. Bhai Desa Singh in his *Rehatnama* says, "A Sikh who is well to do must look to the needs of a poor neighbour. Whenever he meets a traveller or a pilgrim from foreign country, he must serve him devotedly."<sup>9</sup> (b) *Shabad-ka-Langar: The Word as Sacramental Food*: Equally important is the spiritual food which must be imparted to all who come to the temple for participation in worship and prayer not only through any liturgical prayer but through the following traditionally established practices: Before elucidating these practices it may be emphatically stated that there are clear-cut references and comments on this *Shabad-ka-langar*, and its various aspects throughout the Sikh scriptures. The most conspicuous is one mentioned by Rai Balwand and Satta, the bards of Guru Angad, who say in their *Var*: *langar chalai gurbabad ka har tot na avi khatiai*: The Sacramental food of the Divine Word is being ceaselessly distributed, it is open for distribution all day, and yet it is ever full."<sup>10</sup> The three methods adopted in Sikhism are:

(i) *Organized Kirtan*: Singing of the hymns may be performed by the laymen or the professionals. In the Golden Temple no lecture or discourse can be delivered in the inner precincts of the shrine. The singing of the hymns must continue from 4.0 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. This is the undiminishing spiritual food which the pilgrims get when they visit the Golden Temple, or many other Sikh temples where these healthy traditions are maintained. The devotees who come to the shrine listen to musical songs of the Gurus which give their thirsting and hungry souls sustenance and spiritual food of the rare order. It inspires them and illumines them. Professional performers of *Kirtan* no doubt have tended to corrupt this sacred institution,

but the responsibility for corrupting them or dissuading them from corruption lies with the organizers who employ them. Listening to this divine music is as efficacious as performing it, if of course, one listens to it with wrapt attention and in a meditative mood.

(ii) *Katha: Interpretation of Sikh scriptures.* The interpretation of Sikh scriptures can be done only by seasoned scholars and theologians, who have acquired a good knowledge of the theology, history and philosophy of the scriptures. Generally one hymn is taken up for interpretation and the whole *Katha* (Sermon) is delivered in the form of interpretation, illustrated by facts of history, and scriptural references. Guru Hargobind once said that a theologian having 14 qualities was alone competent to interpret the Sikh Scriptures. The major qualities which an interpreter should have are: (1) Ability to understand the letter and spirit of the Scriptures (2) Ability to recite the hymn correctly in the same mood and musical tone in which it is written. (3) He must be a man known for his earnestness in knowledge and love of truth. (4) He must have ability to dispel the doubts and the misunderstandings of the listeners and should be able to answer serious and sincere questioners. (5) He must be able to correctly relate history and tradition with the hymns he is interpreting. (6) He must have a thorough knowledge of all related religious traditions, *sabhnā shastran ka gyata hovai*. (7) His speech and delivery of sermon should be impressive and moving. (8) He should be humble and limit his needs and requirements to the minimum. (9) He should be able to judge correctly the response of his listeners, and emphasise on the theme that interests them and swiftly change the theme where people show a lack of interest. (10) He should accept what is offered to him by the congregation as remuneration contentedly.<sup>11</sup> The tradition of *Katha* was very well maintained until recent time, by traditionally trained scholars. But at present there is a tendency among educated Sikhs, mostly retired people who happen to read some *Tikka*: (Commentary) once, to become Interpreters of Scriptures (*Katha-vachak*) over night, and in many temples where they get time to deliver sermons they speak more nonsense than sense.

(iii) *Sacrament of the Written Word*: Guru Gobind Singh employed hundreds of poets, scholars and scribes to produce monumental works of history, philosophy theology, and translations from classical works of Sanskrit and Persian. He personally explained and interpreted the Scriptures to 48 theologians, sent them to various seats of learning. The Nirmala school of Benaras is well known. Bhai Mani Singh was sent to Amritsar in 1700 A.D. with five Sikhs to establish a Centre of Theological Studies and there he prepared copies of *Adi Granth*, *Dasm Granth*, *Janam Sakhis*, and inspired the writings of *Gurbilases*. Baba Dip Singh established a similar centre at Damdama (*Sabo ki Talwandi*). Baba Binod Singh at Khadur and Goindwal. These Seminaries became the most important centres of Missionary and Creative work, and all the great heroes of the 18th Century owed their discipline and character to these centres. These traditional centres of Sikh studies suffered a serious setback during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but Sikh studies continued to be seriously taken up by many Saint scholars in their individual *deras*. We find a wealth of unexplored theological and historical literature in these *deras*. But organized theological studies have not been established, and there is no such Sikh institution where students of Sikhism can study systematic theology or Sikh philosophy.

History has repeatedly taught the Sikhs that whenever they have neglected creative dissemination of the moral and spiritual teachings (*Shabad kâ langar*) they have caused damage to their own national character and dignity and their very existence. Such is the moral and spiritual crisis the Sikh people face even today. These sacraments are the pillars of Sikhism. Whenever corruption and malpractices creep into them, the whole institutional structure of this faith becomes sick, and decadence creeps in. We are passing through such a phase, but awareness of the possible dangers of this trend is also becoming acuter and the educated Sikh youth, and the uncommitted intelligentsia in India and England is consciously aspiring to fight the naked corruption and the colossal misuse of the Sikh Temple funds, and plan to do something positive for the dissemination of Sikh thought and enlightened literature.

### Initiatory Ceremonies in other Religions

There is no higher religion which does not have Baptism or Initiatory ceremonies of its own. When people examine Sikh baptism as an isolated phenomenon, every phase in it appears to be an enigma. No religion in India up to the time of the Gurus had water and the sword as the medium of baptism. No initiation in India ever envisaged the break through of caste, colour, racial barrier, elimination of monastic orders and priestly class, and the complete equality of men and women. We shall give very brief resume of the various initiatory ceremonies, based on authentic and authoritative documents of those faiths, in the context of which it will be easy for serious scholars of religion and mysticism to appreciate the symbolism and ethical content of Sikh Baptism. Westerners who claim to have read many books on these religions do not know the basic structures of these initiatory rites.

In the Semetic world the initiatory rites of Judaism have formed the basis of baptism and conversion rites in other Semetic faiths like Christianity and Islam. "In Judaism, baptism (immersion in water or ablution), sacrifice and circumcision remained the three essentials for a proselyte to accept Judaism. Sacrifice was bloodless and in later stages took the form of expiatory offerings. Circumcision was much more important. Baptism was a religious ablution signifying purification and later took the form of complete immersion (*tabilash*). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean." (Ezek xxx, vi. 25) <sup>12</sup>"He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised." (Genesis 17: 9-12) Every male child is circumcised on the eighth day. Only if the child's health demands postponement does the ceremony take place on a later date. Among traditional Jews circumcision is performed by a *mohel*, a man trained to perform this rite. Among reformed Jews circumcision is sometimes performed by a doctor in the presence of a Rabbi who leads the prayer."<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Ezra Spicehandler of Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem informed me recently that now baptism is essential only

for converting non-Jews to Judaism, before they are circumcised, but for those born of Jewish parents only circumcision is necessary. Even the liberal philosopher Spinoza could say of circumcision, "Such great importance do I attach to the sign of the Covenant, that I am persuaded that it is sufficient by itself to maintain the separate existence of the nation forever."<sup>14</sup> This idea of maintaining the separate existence of the nation is very much there in the Sikh baptism from the time of Guru Nanak to the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the creator of the Khalsa Holy Order.

Christianity rejected circumcision but accepted immersion in water as means of baptizing, while Islam rejected baptism by water but accepted circumcision as means of conversion. Scholars of Judaism assert that the only Christian conception of baptism at variance with Jewish ideas is displayed in the declaration of John that one who would come after him would not baptize with water, but with the Holy Ghost (Mark i. 8; John i, 27). Yet a faint resemblance to the notion is displayed in the belief expressed in the Talmud that the Holy Spirit could be drawn upon as Water is drawn from the well (based upon Isaiah xlii, 3; Yer Sukk, v 1, 55 a of Joshua b Levi). And there is a somewhat Jewish tinge even to the prophecy of the Evangelists (Matthew iii, 11 and Luke iii, 16), who declare that Jesus will baptize with fire as well as with the Holy Ghost, for according to Abbahu, true baptism is performed with fire (Sanh. 39 a). Both the statements of Abbahu and of the Evangelists must of course be taken metaphorically."<sup>15</sup>

In Christianity baptism with water is intimately linked with revelation of the Holy Spirit. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (John 3. 5) Jesus speaks of his death as baptism—this later baptism on Cavalry inaugurated a wider ministry unfettered by the limitations of earthly missions. St. Paul in Romans (6, 3-5) states, "Do you know that all we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into death. For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through

the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."<sup>16</sup>

In Hinduism the initiation (*Upanayan*) is based fundamentally on the principle of perpetuating the four castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. Each preceding caste is superior by birth to the one following. The Sudra is considered to be born with a load of *karmic* sins committed by him in his past life which he can expiate only by serving higher castes by performing degrading menial duties for them. All except Sudras or those who have committed grave sins can be initiated and can study Vedas and kindle sacred fire.<sup>17</sup> The initiation is the consecration in accordance with the text of Vedas, of only the male Hindus. Hindu women cannot be initiated. The Brahmin is the privileged class in every phase of initiation.<sup>18</sup>

A Brahmin is initiated at 8 and is seated on antelope skin, a kshatriya at the age of 11 and is seated on the skin of spotted deer and a Vaisya is initiated at the age of 12 and is seated on the skin of cow-hide. When the Brahmin has passed 16th, the Kshatriya 22nd and Vaisya 24th year of his life, they have lost their right of initiation. Let them not initiate such men nor teach them, nor perform sacrifice for them.<sup>19</sup>

The girdle of the Brahmin should be made of *munge* grass, that of Kshatriya of a bow string, that of Vaisya of woollen thread. The garment of the Brahmin should be dyed red, those of their two castes with tumeric. The staff of the Brahmin should be made of Bilva or Palasa wood. For the other two castes the staves should be made of *Pilu* wood. Having had the hair shaved all round his head, he is initiated. The *Gayatri mantra* is recited to a Brahmin, *Trishtubh* to a Kshatriya and *Gagari* to a Vaisya. The teacher makes the student sip water three times and then hands over to him the staff with the five verses, "Blessings may give us . . ." (Rig Veda V, 51, 11-51). The student then goes to the village to beg food first from his mother and then from a woman who will not refuse. He offers fee and alms to his Brahmin teacher."<sup>20</sup>

When Buddha preached his first sermon at Isipatne in

Benaras to the five Brahmin ascetics (*Pancavaggiya*) they became his first formal converts and they were the first to enter the order. Hence they constituted the original founders of *bhikkhu-sangha*. He adopted the formula *ehi-bhikkhu* Come O monk) for their admission. They were called the *Pancavaggiya*. After them the total number was sixty.<sup>21</sup> There are two forms of Buddhist initiation or *Dikhsha*:

(1) *Pravrija* (pali: *Pabbajja*) Lower and Preparatory. Literally it means 'going out' and by this ceremony one goes out from prior state of life. At this stage boys are admitted to a monks' hermitage in order to live with them. It corresponds to the Brahmachari initiation of Hindu monk. Without the preceptor's permission or direction he cannot do anything.

(2) *Upasampada* means arrival or entry into the fully accredited members of the *sangha*. It is never confirmed on a novice under the age of 20 years. When he is ordained he becomes a *Bhikkhu*. After ten years standing he becomes a *sthavira* (*Thera*) or Elder. This ceremony is generally performed in April and May on a full-moon day. Consensus is taken whether he deserves it or not. In the mystic school of Japanese Buddhism, water is sprinkled and it is symbolic of divine knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

There is no baptism as such in Islam, but circumcision serves the same purpose. However almost all major Sufi orders had their distinct methods of initiation along with some fundamental common features, and many Sufi orders had their special symbols. "Sufi dress was an important outward sign of the Sufi way of life as the very name derived from *suf* (wool) worn by early ascetics (*zuhud*) bears this witness. Like other material symbols it came to have an inner significance and investiture with such a garment soon became a sign of initiation. The use of wool went out of fashion during the eleventh century A.D. in favour of the patched garment called *muraqqa* or *khirqa*."<sup>23</sup>

Ali al Hujwiri writes in his *Kashf Al-Mahjub* "The Sufi Shaykhs observe the following rule. When a novice joins them with the purpose of renouncing the world, they subject him to



spiritual discipline for the space of three years. If he fulfils the requirements of this discipline well and good; otherwise, they declare that he cannot be admitted to the Path (*Tariqat*). The first year is devoted to service of the people, the second year to service of God, and the third year to the watching over his own heart. The adept, then, who has attained perfection of saintship takes the right course when he invests the novice with the *muraqqa* after a period of three years during which he has educated him in the necessary discipline. In respect of the qualification which it demands, the *muraqqa'a* or *khirq'a* is comparable to a winding sheet (*kafan*): the wearer must resign his hopes of the pleasures of life, and purge his heart of all sensual delights and devote his life entirely to God."<sup>24</sup> The investment with the *khirq'a* establishes a bond between the Shaikh and the aspirant and makes the aspirant subject himself to the discipline (*tahkim*) of the Shaikh: this *tahkim* being permissible in law. This *khirq'a* is the symbol of the oath of investiture."<sup>25</sup> Most of the Sufi paths have their signs; the sign of the Qadiryas is a rose which is green, because the word Hayy (the Living One) was manifested in green colour to one of the Shaikhs.\*"<sup>26</sup>

## V

### Baptism of the Guru's Lotus Feet (Charnamrit or Charan Pahul Amrit)

*gurdikhiya lai sikh, sikh sadaiyu*  
*Only on receiving ordination from the Guru*  
*Can a disciple call himself a Sikh.*

Bhai Gurdas, *Var 3, pauni 1*

(1) *Mystical Philosophy of Sikh Baptism*: From the time of Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and even in later period, baptism was not administered to people indiscriminately, because baptism was not mere conversion from one faith to another, or from no faith to a new faith, but a moment of spiritual illumination of the disciple by the personal touch or the inner radiance of the Guru (the Perfect Prophet one with

God). Through the Sikh initiation, which was quite original in form, content and meaning, the divine Masters, Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh imparted the spark of His Light to the novice, and awakened his consciousness to new preceptions. From that day, the disciple lived entirely in a New Discipline which was not only different and distinct from Islamic and Hindu discipline but was a life of rare devotion and dedication. Bhai Gurdas who lived with the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Gurus and was a co-compiler of *Adi Granth*, and himself writer of works, which are canonized scriptures and blessed by Guru Arjan as the Key to *Adi Granth*, defines a practising Sikh thus:

*Dead to the world,  
A Sikh lives in the Spirit of the Guru.  
A man does not become a Sikh,  
By merely paying lip service to him.  
A Sikh dispels all doubts and fears,  
And lives a life of deep patience and faith.  
Verily, he is a living martyr,  
A slave of the love of the Lord.  
He does what the Lord wills.  
He forgets all hunger and sleep in His love.  
His hands are busy helping the needy,  
His hands are busy comforting the weary,  
His hands are busy washing their feet.  
Magnanimous, tolerant and serene,  
He lives in the service of humanity.  
In glory a Sikh does not laugh,  
In suffering he does not weep,  
He is a seer living in His Presence.  
He is a devotee imbued with His love.  
He steadily grows into perfection,  
And is blessed and adored  
Like the new moon on the Muslim sacred day of Id.*

Bhai Gurdas Var 3, pauri 18

During my life time I have met about a dozen such practising Sikhs who had attained the highest spiritual state, and it is baptism and their dedication to the vows of Rules of contemplation, action and service of humanity, which have made them such. One of these rare souls is a woman, still shunning publicity of any kind, but living in the peace and freedom of a dedicated discipline. It is a life of spiritual effort, a life of continuous dying and re-living in a new illumined consciousness. That is why Bhai Gurdas calls the Path of an initiated Sikh, "narrower than a hair's breadth and sharper than a two-edged sword (*khanda*)."<sup>22</sup> At the moment of initiation the Guru reveals his Divine Personality through the Word till in the experience of the disciple, the full and resplendent Light of God becomes manifest in the stream of consciousness (*sruti*) of the disciple (*chela*). At this stage the Word (*Shabad*) alone is the living Teacher and the mind concentrating on the inner Music of the Word is the disciple (*chela*).<sup>23</sup>

Thus the disciple possesses within himself an illumined Spirit which is formed by the coalescence of our soul with the Eternal Spirit of the Guru and God. He receives into his inner self the perennial Music of the Word, and contemplation of God's Name becomes for him living in the sanctuary of Il's Presence. Thus Sikh baptism is not only merely an initiatory ceremony but an illumination. The sanctifying grace of baptism brings with it serene and blessed Light which spreads over the whole purified atmosphere of the soul's summit and within our heart there continuously shines that insatiable little diamond of spiritual awareness. Baptism is what the Sikh scriptures call *Rebirth* (*punar-janum*). *Satgur ke janmai gavan mitaiya*. A Rebirth within the House of the Guru eliminates the cycle of birth and death. The upward progress is not based on any mechanical routine of prayers and practices, but in seeking the grace and blessedness of God by contemplation, service and dedication. The mystically oriented Sikh baptism aims at giving to the sincere seekers the power and full revelation of divine Life. With each new pious endeavour there is unveiling of a higher state of rich ethical and spiritual living, which must be

used as a redeeming wealth to help the suffering humanity groping for solace and peace.

(2) *When Guru Nanak Received the Call:* Guru Nanak was in his twenties when he received the *Call*. In the Elected Silence of his enforced Solitude in the forest around Sultanpur (in the present district of Kapurthala), Guru Nanak came face to face with the Supreme Being and received from God, as the symbolic language of the mystical literature puts it, the Cup of Immortality, the Nectar of His divine Presence. God said in the language in which He spoke to prophets: "Nanak! he whom thou favour, shall be blessed by Me, he who receives thy grace shall receive grace from Me. My name is the Supreme Being; your name shall be the Guru-Spirit of My Own Being." Nanak bowed before the Lord. God bestowed on him the robe of honour of His grace and vision (*darshan*)." God then said: "Thou, O Nanak, art the liberated and enlightened one. Whoever follows in thy footsteps shall be liberated and enlightened."<sup>29</sup> This historic communion and dialogue of Guru Nanak with God is recorded by Bhai Nand Lal Goya, the Poet Laureate of Guru Gobind Singh as follows:

*Thus spake God unto Guru Nanak :*  
*Thou, My Son, art the true Guru (Enlightener)*  
*Go reveal My Light to the world.*  
*I will abide in thee in full radiant glory,*  
*My Spirit is in thy soul and being,*  
*My Will is thy will,*  
*My Light is thy wisdom,*  
*Thou knowest My Law and Justice.*  
*Go, reveal the real Path to humanity.*  
*Be the singer of My Love and power;*  
*I will be thy Helper in thy mission,*  
*I will be thy Friend and Companion ever.*  
*He who understands thy greatness, My Son.*  
*And learns from thee My glory and wisdom.*  
*I will reveal Myself to him.*

*This is my abiding promise to thee.  
 Carry all over the world,  
 The torch of My Light and Truth:  
 Be a World-Teacher My Son;  
 Tell the misguided humanity:  
 Without My Light and Power,  
 The whole world is not worth a grain.  
 By My Will, I give Light and Wisdom to men;  
 By My Will, I leave them in darkness;  
 Without true knowledge of My Existence,  
 Humanity wanders in darkness.  
 Religious leaders and pundits,  
 Have become hypocrites and magicians.  
 They may, with limited powers — My gifts,  
 Even kill the living,  
 And bring the dead to life;  
 They may make fire dance on water;  
 These are magical tricks  
 And fruitless feats of occult powers.  
 Show mankind the Way to Me; the Ultimate Reality.  
 Teach the right meditation of Truth;  
 Prevent them from going on the wrong path.  
 Guide them to My Door, My Son.<sup>30</sup>*

It is after receiving this historic call that Guru Nanak founded the New Faith, and he made this new baptism called the *Charnamrit* or *Charan Pahul Ceremony* the basis of his New Dispensation. It was then known as the Sikh Panth, the Nirmal Panth, or the Gurmukh Panth or the Community of the Pure and Enlightened.

(3) *The New Dispensation and the New Baptism*: Inviting men of all faiths and creeds to his newly founded faith and determined to remove all distinctions of caste, colour, race and nationality, Guru Nanak introduced the baptism of *the Lotus Feet of the Guru (Charan Pahul Amrit)* to which Bhai Gurdas testifies:

*In this dark age, Guru Nanak revealed,  
 God, the Supreme Being is One and no other;  
 He initiated his disciples with Charnamrit:  
 Water sanctified by the touch of his lotus feet.  
 And gave a new code of conduct,  
 As the high-way to the path of Truth (Rah-i-ras)*

Bhai Gurdas Var 1. 24

Etymologically *charan- pahul- amrit* conveys the fundamental meaning of the baptism: the word *Charan* means holy feet, usually called lotus feet in the Sikh scriptures, and the word generally becomes *charan-kamal* (lotus feet). Lotus in the mystical philosophy is the symbol of Wisdom bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Barlow says, "The lotus plant was sacred with Egyptians as with the Indians. According to Rouge it was the symbol of the New-Birth, but Lepsius considers it as the symbol of inexhaustible life."<sup>11</sup> Thus in the Sikh scriptures and theology, the Guru's feet are called lotus feet (*charan kamal*) because they symbolize the divine power which rekindles life in the dark and ignorant souls. It no where means human feet, but the first rays of illumination shed on the seeker's soul. In this ceremony, the touch of the Guru's feet imparted to the baptismal Water, the sanctifying power of illumination, and worked the miracle of transfiguring a novice to an illumined man in the manner the philosopher's stone (*Paras*) is able to transmute dross metal. That is why the lotus feet of the Guru is compared with the philosopher's stone in the *Adi Granth*.<sup>12</sup> The word *Pahul* literally means that which bleaches. Without bleaching a cloth cannot be properly dyed in fast colour. Similarly without bleaching with Baptismal Water, sanctified by the Guru's Feet, the heart and soul of the novice cannot be dyed in the radiant colour of His divine Name. So the baptismal Water becomes the *Pahul* after the ceremony is performed. The hymns recited on the baptismal water are Ambrosia or Nectar (*Amrit*). The Word of God or the *mantram* imparted by the Guru is the essence of Nectar of Life. The Commandments for daily prayers and ethical living and inspiration also are ambrosial in spirit. Hence the totality of the baptismal water becomes *Aurrit* (Elixir of Life).

(4) *Guru Gobind Singh baptized Sikhs by Charan-Pahul Ceremony up to the 24th Year of His Ministry*: Guru Gobind Singh was 9 years old when he took up the pontific guidance of the Sikh community and he was 33 years old when he stopped using this ceremony in 1699 A.D. and replaced it dramatically by baptism with the two-edged Sword, for reasons which will be explained in the next chapter. There is clear evidence that up to 1699 he initiated disciples according to *Charan-Pahul* rites. A number of historical works bear witness to this fact. *Sakhi 25 of Sau Sakhi* states: "A handsome young soft spoken lad came to pay homage to Guru Gobind Singh and said, 'O true King, I am the son of Mamula. We are both baptized Sikhs. My father became a Sikh by being initiated through *Charan Pahul* (baptism of the Lotus feet) while I was initiated Sikh by *Khande-di-Pahul* baptism by double-edged sword. I am a resident of Sirhind and a goldsmith by profession. My father died lately and my mother is with me."<sup>32</sup> In *Suraj Prakash*, and *Mehma Prakash* a number of incidents are reported of this period when the disciples were initiated by *Charan-Pahul*. Most conspicuous is the initiation of the Assamese Prince, Rattan Rai who came all over from the distant province of Assam with very rare and precious presents.

(5) *The Brahmins Protest Against the New Dispensation*. In the New Dispensation of Guru Nanak, people from the lowest caste and even Muslims were knit into one brotherhood stronger than family ties. They mixed freely and they ate in one place and they disregarded the laws of the Brahmins and the Mullas. Charity was not to be given to the priests and Brahmins but to the poor and the needy. The Brahmins raised a loud protest in society but Guru Nanak completely disregarded it, asserting that he had broken away from traditional Hinduism and Islam. He said:

*The Hindus are fundamentally in error;  
Having missed the right path, they wander in darkness;  
Narada led them to the worship of idols and images.  
Thus, they have become spiritually blind and deaf.  
In blind idolatrous worship, they live in utter darkness.*

*These uncultured fools worship stone-gods.*

*The stone-god easily sinks in a stream.*

*How can it help you to cross the Ocean of life.*

*Adi Granth, Nanak I, Vihagra, p.556*

During the time of Akbar the Brahmins first wrote a letter of protest against Guru Amar Das and then against Guru Arjan saying, "These Sikh Gurus have started a funny New Religion, aimed at destroying all that is best in Hinduism. They have abolished caste system, they allow Hindus to sit and eat with the Muslims, the rich with the poor. They have also introduced a strange ceremony called the *Charnamrit* and they involve people of all classes in the meditations and contemplation of divine Name. This religion is a hotch potch of all faiths designed to attract everyone, and aimed at destroying the most precious traditions of *Varuasharam* in Hinduism. No one will now care for the Kashatriya and the Brahmins because petty low class people are even taught the use of the sword. The Sikh Gurus have completely rejected Hindu ceremonies and all sacred rites of the Vedas and Shastras concerning birth, marriage and death." "In the face of such virulent criticism Guru Arjan emphatically stated his position.

*I am neither a Hindu nor a Mussalman.*

*I neither keep the Hindu fasts nor the Islamic  
Ramadan*

*I serve Him alone who in the end will save me.*

*My Lord is both the Muslim Allah and the Hindu  
Gosain.*

*And thus have I settled the dispute between the Hindu  
and Muslim*

*I do not go on pilgrimage to Mecca.*

*Nor do I bathe in Hindu holy places.*

*I serve the one Lord, and none beside Him.*

*Neither do I perform Hindu worship,*

*Nor do I say the Muslim prayer.*

*Though I belong body and soul to the One God  
Who is both Allah and Rama. Listen Kabir:*

*Encountering the True Guru one encounters God.*

*Adi Granth: Guru Arjan, Bhairon 1136*



To the threatening challenges, that continued to come, the Sikh Gurus repeatedly said that theirs was a New Religion with a New Church, and prayers, and modes of worship of their own. They were quite unconcerned about what the Brahmins and Mullas did. They had established the New Faith not for confrontation with any religion but to bring all other religions in the spirit of moral and spiritual co-operation in the love of God. But the repeated challenges and threats of the fanatic Hindus and Muslims led to the martyrdom of the great Guru Arjan at the young age of 48. He was tortured to death and his was the first martyrdom for his faith in the long history of India.

(6) *The Doctrine of the Guru Becoming the Disciple Exalted to the Position of the Guru. (Guru Chela, Chela Guru):* Six months before he passed away from this ephemeral world, Guru Nanak installed his devoted disciple Lehna as his successor and enthroned him on the pontific throne. While performing the ceremony of installation, Guru Nanak seated Angad on the pontific throne, circumambulated three times around him and then prostrated before him in humble submission declaring, "From this day you are the Guru while I am your disciple (Chela). From this day you will initiate disciples and you will sit on the pontific throne while I will remain a disciple."

Bhai Gurdas calls this utter humility of the Guru, and this strangely new method of transferring divine Power as, "making the holy Ganges river run backwards from the plains to the mountains. Thus every Guru installed his successor some days or months before his death and acted as the humble disciple of his successor.

*"The Guru became the disciple and the disciple became the Guru by exalting him after putting him to severe tests. From one Supreme Person, a Prophet, another Supreme Person, a Prophet, was born. One Light blended with another. The two then became One in Spirit with two apparent forms."*<sup>33</sup>

It is important to grasp this doctrine in order to understand Guru Gobind Singh's drastic change from Charan Pahul Bap-

tism to baptism of the two-edged Sword (*Khanda*).

(7) *The Sikh Code of Conduct From Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh* (1699 A.D.) (*Rehat*). No living and progressing religion can survive without inner and outer laws or rules of mental, moral, social and spiritual discipline called *Adab* by the Sufis and *Rehat* by the Sikhs. When the symbolic features of these laws are taken literally, as less enlightened people tend to do, the result is egoism and bigotry. When the outer discipline is considered as a means, and efforts for moral and spiritual exaltation are intensified, the seeker of Truth achieves one higher stage after another. The *Adi Granth* is full of these moral instructions pertaining to the ethical code but we shall present the testimony of Guru Ram Das, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Dal, which sums up all that can be said about the Sikh Code of conduct. (*Rehat*).

### Testimony of Guru Ram Das

*He who calls himself a Sikh of the true Guru,  
Let him on the morrow rise betimes,  
And contemplate on the Name of God.  
Let him with disciplined effort  
Rise in the dark hours of the morn,  
Take his bath and clean his soul in the tank of Nectar  
As he meditates on the Name imparted by the Guru.  
All his sins and evils will be washed away,  
When the dawn breaks at sunrise.  
Let him recite his prayers and sing his hymns,  
Throughout the day while he moves about  
Let him hold in his heart the Name of God.  
Let him repeat the Name of the Lord with every  
breath.  
Such a Sikh is indeed very dear to the Guru.  
A Sikh who receives the mercy and grace of the Lord,  
Receives the blessed sermon of illumination from the  
Guru.  
Nanak seeks the dust of the feet of such a Sikh  
Who utters the Name and inspires others to utter.<sup>34</sup>*

Guru Ram Das highlights the following essential features of the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehat*). (1) A Sikh who sleeps at normal hours of the night must rise early in the morning about two hours before dawn. (2) He should perform two-fold ablution. He should bathe his body in clean water, and while hathing if he recites the hymns of the Guru, or utters the Name of God in deep remembrance, he shall be performing the second ablution of hathing his mind in the nectar of the tank of the divine Word. Such should be his two-fold morning ablution. (3) Up to sunrise he should, with deep concentration and attention, inwardly utter the Name of God. Such a contemplation in the early hours of morning, when complete solitude is available, will erase from the seekers mind all evil propensities and sins. (4) Immediately after sunrise he should say his prayers. (5) Even in the daytime while he is performing his mundane duties he should remember God every moment by stringing the Name of God to his very breath. This is automatically achieved by him who lives the life of deep meditation. (6) Blessed is such a Sikh who remembers God himself and inspires others to remember Him.

It is important to mention here that in many other hymns of the Guru there are strict injunctions against drinking wine, adultery, hypocrisy or mere pretentions to religion, dishonesty, disloyalty, ungratefulness, treachery, or earning one's living through evil or sinful means. Even charity given out of stolen property, or out of money earned by exploiting the poor is sin and will be punished in the Lord's court by His ultimate justice. Guru Ram Das in one of his hymns says: "A man comes with a hawl full of wine; another man fills a cup out of it and he drinks lustily out of it. Drinking wine, cup after cup he loses his sense of discrimination and his balance of mind. Perversity takes the better of him and he talks senselessly. He loses all sense of right or wrong, good or bad, and even the sense of what is his and what is not his. Such a man who abandoning himself to drinks forgets God, is punished in the Lord's Court and is severely chastised. O Man, as far as it is within your control shun this wine. Drink only the Wine of the Love of God.

drinking which you are intoxicated in the divine knowledge of His Presence and blessed by His Grace." (*Adi Granth*, Var Bihagra, 1: 16. p.554).

### Testimony of Bhai Gurdas

*Bhai Gurdas was co-compiler of Adi Granth, and his works were called "Key to Adi Granth," by Guru Arjan. He is the Father of Sikh philosophy and mysticism.*

"A Sikh of the Guru worships only One God and looks on no gods or goddesses for inspiration and support. For him to turn his back on the one Lord and run after gods and goddesses for some material benefits is like behaving like a housewife becoming a whore and chasing many men for depraved satisfaction." (*Kabit Swayyas* 470 to 490 are on this theme). The Essence of God's vision as revealed to Guru Nanak is the *Mul-Mantra*: (the Central Belief) which is: *ek Omkar, satnam, karta purkh, n'rbhau nirvair, akal murat, ajuni saibhang, gurparsad*: The One Transcendent God pervades all; Eternal Truth is His Name, Creator of all things, Fearing nothing and at enmity with none. Timeless is His image. Not begotten, Being of His own Being: By the Grace of the Guru He is revealed to Man. (Var 3: 15; 6:19) The divine Word (Guru Mantra) given to the world by Guru Nanak is *Vah-Guru*: (Wonder of Wonder art Thou O Revealer of Light) Var 11 : 3; 13 : 2; 12 : 7; 24 : 1).

"The Sikhs of the Guru rise early in the morning and take their bath" (Var 40 : 11) In the ambrosial hours of the morning they sit in the contemplative *samadhi* of the Unfathomable Lord and meditate with inward attention and concentration on the Name of God. At daybreak they recite the morning prayer *Japji*. At sunset they recite *Rahras* and at night before going to bed they recite the *Kirtan Sohila*: (Var 1 : 38; 6 : 3).

"After saying his morning prayers a Sikh goes to the Presence of the Guru or Congregation and listens to the recitations and singing of the hymns of the Sikh scriptures. Leaving all scruples and social prejudices he serves the devotees of God.

He earns his living by righteous means and shares the fruits of his labours with others. He first serves his guests with food and then eats contentedly what is left. (*Var* 40 : 11). All the four castes, all the creeds, and all the sects of yogis and sannyasins when entering the fold of Sikhism merge and blend into One Brotherhood, the *Nirman Panth* or the *Gurmukh Panth* (The Community of the Pure, or the Brotherhood of the Enlightened). (*Var* 18 : 14; *Var* <sup>1</sup> : 45).

### Testimony of Bhai Nand Lal

*Bhai Nand Lal was the Poet Laureate and the most dearly loved disciple of Guru Gobind Singh. He wrote two Rebatnamas; one before the Khalsa was ordained, and the other after 1699 known as Tankhahnama. The following Rehatnama was written in 1695, that is four years before the New Baptism of the two-edged-Sword (Khande-di-Pahul) was introduced. It is thus the Code of Conduct (Rehat) enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh, when he baptized Sikhs by Charan Pahul.*

Spake Guru Gobind Singh: "Listen my Friend, Nand Lal, to my instructions on the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Gursikh Rehat*). A Sikh of the Guru should rise up at dawn, and take his bath and sit in contemplation of the Divine Name. He should then recite the morning prayer *Japji* and the *Jap* and after morning prayer he should seek the companionship of my Presence (*darshan*). He should come with the utmost reverence and sit in the divine Presence of the Guru. In the day time he should listen to religious discourses. At sunset he should recite or listen to *Rahras* (Evening Prayer). He should also listen to the discourses and *Kirtan* in the evening. Such a Sikh is liberated and reaches the State of immortality." (1-6).

Bhai Nand Lal asked Guru Gobind Singh: "*Gurudev*, you say every Sikh far and near must seek your divine Presence. Will you, Master, graciously describe your Inscrutable Presence and Personality." Spake Guru Gobind Singh in reply: "Listen attentively dear Nand Lal: "I have three Personalities, and three different manifestations of my divine Presence. (1)

*Nirguna Swarup*: the Attributeless Form. (2) *Sargun*: Form With Attribute and (3) *Guru-Sabad*: Form Manifest as the Word of God (6-8). My first Personality, the *Nirguna* Form, is beyond all human and earthly attributes, and beyond the grasp of human reason, and therefore it is described as "Not this, not this." Just as the sun reflects equally in all the vessels of water on earth, so also the divine eternal Spirit of the Guru pervades all, and it is there as the hidden Indwelling Spirit. The Word of God, as revealed in the holy *Adi Granth* is my second Form. Let him who wishes to hear my voice listen to the holy scriptures. The knowledge revealed in the Guru's Word is the Wisdom of the Guru. Let him who wishes to talk to me, read the Holy Book. The Holy Book, *Adi Granth* is my image and my Living Presence. Doubt it not in the least. Let him who seeks the grace and blessings of my Presence circumambulate thrice round the altar-seat of the Holy Book, and sit before it with the utmost reverence with folded hands (*hath jod kar adab sion*). He should then recite the morning prayer of *Japji* and *Jap*. He should not commit adultery, but should lead a pure and noble life. He who serves me thus humbly, and with sincere devotion, his worship, his prayer and service shall reach me and he shall be blessed." (9-26).

Nand Lal again asked, "Master, your Attributeless Form cannot be seen by everyone. A Sikh would be tempted to see thee and seek thee only in manifest physical form. How can we, Master, see your Attributeless Form within this world of attributes and material qualities." Your Formless Form is Infinite. O World-Teacher, Lord of divine Wisdom whose Light shines in every heart, reveal to us the secret of knowing Thy Infinite Form."

Spake Guru Gobind Singh: "Listen Bhai Nand Dal to my words. First a Sikh should contemplate the living embodiment of the Guru and then concentrate and meditate on the Word, the Name of God. To such a one shall be revealed the mystery of the Eternal Spirit of the Guru." (27-36). *On the banks of the Satluj river (at Anandpur) Guru Gobind Singh delivered this sermon on the Sikh Code of Conduct (Rehatnama) to Nand Lal*

in the month of Maghar (November-December) in the year  
Vikrami Samvat 1752 (1695 A.D.)<sup>63</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Thomas Merton, *The New Man* p.142.
2. G. A. Gaskell, Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths.
3. Arthur Buttrick *et al*: The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.
4. James Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible: See Sacrament.
5. (i) *an mahaprasad vand khuayla*: brought mahanprashad and distributed it as sacramental offering; Bhai Gurdas, *Var* 20, 10.  
(ii) *ek mistan pan lavat mahanprasad*: Some bring the sweet sacramental offering of mahanprasad, Bhai Gurdas, *Kabit* 309.
6. *khand ghrir cun jal pavak ikatar bhae panc mil pragat pancamrit pragas hai*.  
Sugar, ghee (clarified butter), flour, water and fire  
The five ingredients combine to make panchamrit (karahphashad)  
Bhai Gurdas: *Kabit* 124
7. *Langar daulat vandiai ras amrit khir ghiowali*:  
In the durbar of Guru Angad is daily distributed the ambrosial sacramental food which includes milk pudding mixed with ghee.  
Var Rai Balwand and Satta: 2 *Adi Granth* p.967
8. Bhai Mani Singh, *Bhaktamal*, p.62.
9. *Rehatnama*: Bhai Desa Singh (Complete translation given in Chapter 3).
10. *Langar chalai gurshabad ka Har tot na avai khatiyai*  
In the durbar of Guru Angad there is distributed continuously the spiritual food of the Divine Word, and there is never any sign of diminishing in this overflowing treasure of divine Wisdom.  
Var Rai Balwand and Satta: *Adi Granth* p.967
11. Bhai Mani Singh: *Bhaktamal*, pp.168-9.
12. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1925.
13. *Encyclopedia Judaica* see Baptism.
14. Saul Spiro: *Fundamentals of Judaism*: p.87.
15. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1925.
16. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*; *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* (Arthur Buttrick ed); Ronald Lawler: *The Teaching of Christ*; Karl Barth: *The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism*, Tr Payne; Murray: *Christian Baptism*; O Cullman; *Baptism* in N. T. Eng Tr: Reid.
17. George Buhler Tr: *A pastamba*, Prasna 1, Patala 1, Khanda 1.
18. *Griyha Sutra of Gabbila II, Prapothaka II, Kandika 10*.
19. Gautama: *Institutes of the Sacred Law*, Chapter 1.

20. *The Hindu Sacraments* are given in "The Institute of Vishnu" p.113-116 Translation; Julius Jolly.
21. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*: James Hastings.
22. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* Vol III; The Book of Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka) in the *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*.
23. Spencer Trimingham: *The Sufi Orders of Islam*, p.181.
24. Ali Al-Hajwiri, *Kashf Al-Mahjub* Tr R A Nicholson, p.54-5.
25. Shihab ad-din as- Suhrawardi: *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* p.68-69.
26. For the Rules of the Sufi Novices see: Kitab al-Muridan Tr: Menahem Milson. The significance of the Mystic Rose of the Qadris is described in Brown's Dervishes.
27. Bhai Gurdas Var 82, pauri 1.
28. *Sabad Guru Surti dhuni chela*: Sidh Gosht: Guru Nanak.
29. *Janam Sakhi Bala* (Litho) p.89; Trilochan Singh: *Guru Nanak: Founder of Sikhism*, p.70-71.
30. Bhai Nand Lal: *Ganjnama* Tr: Trilochan Singh.
31. Barlow: *Essays on Symbolism*, p.32.
32. Bhai Randhir Singh in his "*Charan Kamal ki Mauf*" has given the mystical and theological interpretation of the Lotus Feet of the Guru in this Treatise.
33. *gur chela chela guru bedh hiral hira*: Bhai Gurdas Var 9: 8.  
*ek jot doe murti ik sabad sarisai,*  
*gur chela chela guru samjhae kisai*      *ibid* Var 9: 16.  
 There are over a dozen such quotations on this theme in the Vars of Bhai Gurdas 1.
34. *Adi Granth: Guru Ram Das, Var Gauri*, p.305.
35. Bhai Gurdas' Vars 3, 6, 9, 12, 19, 28, 39 are exclusively devoted to the Sikh Code of Conduct. Each Var has on the average about 20 verses.
36. I have checked the Text of Bhai Nand Lal's *Rehatnama* from two Manuscripts of late 18th century and two printed versions of 19th century. They all give the same date. The minor differences in text are caused by the errors of the scribes in copying.



## CHAPTER 3

### GURU GOBIND SINGH'S BAPTISM OF THE TWO-EDGED SWORD

*God sent me to this world,  
Giving this mandate to me:  
I have cherished and blessed thee as My Son,  
To create and organize a Community of Faith (Panth).  
Go there and establish Righteousness,  
And turn people away from evil path.  
I stood with folded hands,  
And bowing my head in humble submission said:  
The Community of Faith (Panth) can be established  
If Thou graciously helpst O Lord  
For this divine task I have come to this world.  
For establishing the Path of Righteousness, God  
sent me,  
And for upholding freedom and justice everywhere;  
To chastise tyrants and despots,  
And annihilate their terror and tyranny.*

Guru Gobind Singh: Autobiography:

*Bachiter Natak*, Chapter 6, 29, 42

We have seen in the last chapter that after receiving the *Call*, Guru Nanak had become supernally exalted with incomparable and perfect enlightenment and he was determined to translate his new religious experiences and mystic illumination into far reaching thoughts and actions. During his travels he had established his own centres in far flung places like Dacca, Rameshram, Ceylon and Baghdad, some of which were never visited by any subsequent Guru, and yet retain to this

day their historical identity. In his missionary journeys he wore Sufi garbs of holiness while visiting Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, and Tibetan robes when visiting Himalayan Buddhist shrines. But after he settled at Kartarpur to institutionalize the Sikh Church on which his successors built a self-sufficient and autonomously progressing edifice, "Guru Nanak was determined to translate his new religious experiences and mystic illumination into far reaching thoughts and actions. He was now ready to give to the world, a new conception of synthetic and universal faith based on realistically conceived social foundations and political consciousness."

The New Dispensation was then known as *Baba Nanak di Sikhi* to his followers, and the community was generally known as *Nanak Panthis* or *Nanak Prast*<sup>1</sup> (Believers in the Doctrines of Nanak). Guru Nanak firmly stated through his actions and writings that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, neither a Yogi nor a Sufi, thus leaving no room for being dubbed a Hindu or Muslim Reformer within the folds of these religions. From Guru Nanak onwards there are hundreds of examples in history of Brahmins giving up their sacred thread and Hindu commitments and Muslims giving up the laws of *Shariat* to accept Sikhism but there is not a single example of a Nanak Panthi or a *Nanak Prast* becoming Hindu or Muslim in any sense of the word. To the general masses of other faiths he said: be such a Hindu, be such a Muslim, be such a Yogi or Vaishnava, and all his definitions were in terms of his own doctrines. After he settled at Kartarpur he never put on any holy garb. He just put on ordinary Punjabi dress of the day.<sup>2</sup> Sikhi and non-Sikh scholars who picture Guru Nanak as a prophet with a wander thirst trying to preach the love of God in a vague manner, ignoring history and his Writings, forget that he spent the last 20 years of his life (a period longer than the ministry of five out of his nine successors) to establish the institution of the New Church on firm footing. Here he established a pontific throne of his own, and ignoring the assertive claims of his sons, he installed his devoted and humble disciple Angad as his successor, giving him a copy of his own works (*Pothi*<sup>3</sup>) as an important and essential article

of Spiritual Regalia. The Holy Word (*Gurbani*) was to be the embodiment of His own Spirit. (*Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani*): "The Word is the Guru, and the Guru is Manifest in the Word."

We have also seen that Guru Nanak laid the foundation of his new faith, (1) by channelising his spiritual experiences and imparting them through his own creative baptism known as *Charan-pahul-baptism* (baptism of the lotus feet of the Guru); (2) by imparting to his disciples a new *Guru-mantram* (the *Mystic Word of the Guru*), never known to Indian religious literature and tradition (3) by giving his disciples new prayers written by him such as *Japji*, *Rahiras* and *Sohila Arti*, which are still three of the seven daily prayers, and form the Introductory part of the *Adi Granth*. (4) by giving his disciples a new Code of Conduct (*Rehat*) which indicated a complete break from social and cultural discipline of the Hindus and Muslims.

Differing on many points from other faiths, Guru Nanak avoided sectarian confrontation, but not only welcomed theological discussions in a polite and courteous manner, but provoked a dialogue which gave him opportunity to clearly enunciate his own system of philosophy in the terminology of other systems. His compositions like *Siddha Goshit*, *Omkar in Dakhani Raga*, *Arati*, are clear examples of Guru Nanak's distinctive philosophy expressed in terms of Yoga, Saivism and Vaisnavism. Quite a unique feature of this philosophy was the centrality of man, and emphasis on social, cultural and political freedoms, and an open condemnation of cruelty and terrorism of all types. Kabir, Namdev and other saints had suffered at the hands of the Muslim rulers of the time but we do not find a single word of protest in their writings against cruelty of the rulers. Guru Nanak condemns the invasion of Babur and the terror he tried to strike in the heart of the people. He also condemns the earlier Afghan Rulers saying, "the age is like a drawn Sword, the kings are butchers; decency and virtues have taken wings."<sup>5</sup> His successor Guru Angad who spent all the 12 years of his ministry in educating the younger generation in their mother tongue added, "Every beggar today aspires to be a king. Every blockhead poses as a great Pundit. The

blind act as connoisseurs of gems. Hypocrites and scoundrels have become spiritual leaders. Liars are considered perfect type of men."<sup>6</sup>

## II

### **Annual Gathering of Baisakhi (New Year Day) And the Missionary Order of Masands (Masnads)**

Among Guru Amar Das' prominent missionaries was one named Paro Julka. He had acquired such an exalted spiritual state and so high moral status by virtue of his character and inner illumination, that Guru Amar Das addressed him as *paramhansa*. One day *Paramhansa* Paro Julka suggested that Sikhs from all over the country should come to the Guru on a particular day, and this auspicious day should be an occasion for national-cultural gathering of Sikh Community. This remarkable suggestion of Bhai Paro was at once considered and accepted by Guru Amar Das who fixed *Baisakhi* (New Year Day) as the day of national cultural gatherings, which generally fell in the last week of March in those days.<sup>7</sup> From that year onwards *Baisakhi* became significant for the following purposes: Firstly, novices and new devotees were baptized. Secondly, it was an opportunity to meet the Guru, seek his personal guidance on problems that troubled their minds. Thirdly, the mingling of people from different States, different races, castes, creeds, colour and speaking different languages in one all-embracing spiritual brotherhood was a unique cultural phenomenon, which shocked both orthodox Hindus and Muslims when they saw bitterly antagonistic religions and cultures blending into one divine worship and spiritual humanism.

Guru Amar Das organised missionary work on a sound footing. In 22 dioceses corresponding to the 22 States of the Mughal Emperor he appointed 146 well trained missionaries out of which 94 were men while 52 were women. Never in the history of India had women been given such august position and power. The whole of Kashmir and Kabul were under Women provincial Heads. Guru Amar Das "introduced such

radical social reforms" that he struck at the very roots of the influence of the Hindu priestly class, and though in such a matter where long standing customs of cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling, and Sikhism put on the way of gradual dissociation from Hinduism."<sup>3</sup> Guru Amar Das fought against the cruel custom of *Sati* and did not allow any woman to be burnt with her husband. He even encouraged widow marriage and opposed *purdah* system. These missionaries were called *Masands* or *Masnads*, which in Arabic means delegated authority, or One belonging to the throne. Considerable authority was given to them. But they were not given two powers. (1) They could not use the tithes they had collected without the express permission of the Guru. All the collections called for were to be sent to the Guru. (2) They were supposed to teach and inspire seekers of truth and prepare them as novices for Sikhism, but they were not supposed to initiate or baptize them in any way. (3) They were instructed to lead a simple life and serve people with humility and not exploit their devotion and piety through delegated authority. During the time of Guru Hargobind corruption crept into this missionary system. The third generation of these *Masands* began to take advantage of the political situation in the Punjab.

### III

#### **The Sword of Piri (Spiritual Sovereignty) And the Sword of Miri (Political Sovereignty)**

Foreseeing the end of Akbar's reign of tolerance and peace, Guru Arjan trained his son Hargobind as warrior leader, and employed many eminent soldiers for his training who later became the commanders of his army. When Guru Arjan was tortured to death by Jahangir's orders and conspiracy of his Hindu and Muslim enemies, Guru Hargobind on succeeding him, donned two Swords. He called one, the Sword of *Piri* (the Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty) and he called the other the Sword of *Miri* (the Sword of Political Sovereignty). This indicates that the Sword as a symbol of spiritual sovereignty was

already there and the Gurus asserted it by their distinct school of thought and refusal to be subservient to any other religious tradition. Its integrity, its path, and its dynamic individuality was to be Swordlike, and from this day onward Sikhism became a Religion with two swords in its hands, the sword of spirituality and the sword of political sovereignty which kept the Sikhs free from fear under all alien rulers. Guru Hargobind passed on this Sword to his successors, as it had become a part of spiritual Regalia of Guruship, and Guru Gobind Singh, as we shall see passed it on to the Khalsa.

The *Masands* of the third generation now took advantage of the difficulties which the Guru had to encounter because of the political situation. His cousin, and some other members of the Guru's family had set up parallel guruship, which ultimately collapsed, and the *masands* either shifted loyalty, or some of them started initiating disciples and keeping the tithes with them. At this juncture Guru Hargobind issued letters to the Sikhs saying that only those taking baptism from the Guru were genuine Sikhs. The Sikhs baptized by *masands* would not be recognized as Sikhs. Those baptized by the Guru began to be called Khalsa. The word Khalsa in Mughal terminology meant "land owned by the King." So the Sikhs who were really dedicated to the Guru and were baptized by him were called "Khalsa," a term later used by Guru Gobind Singh for all baptized by the new baptism of the Two edged Sword.

#### IV

#### The Baisakhi of March, 1699

For 24 years of his ministry Guru Gobind Singh continued to baptize Sikhs according to the *Charan Pahul* Ceremony already described. But on the *Baisakhi* of March 30, 1699 A.D. when thousands of people had come from far and near and assembled there to be received and blessed by the Guru a strange thing happened. Suddenly the Guru drew his sword, looked very fierce and demanded, "If there is any true Sikh let him give to his Guru his head." Let him who is really devoted to me as a disciple prove it by offering his head. One

disciple Daya Ram, a Kshatriya, of Lahore stood up and offered his head. He was taken into a tent pitched far away and the Guru came out with his sword dripping with blood. The eminent Tamil Poet, Subramania Bharati has vividly and realistically portrayed the dramatic happenings of this Baisakhi:

*Suddenly on the royal platform,  
Stood a figure, luminous  
In youth, strength and splendour.  
His eyes blew divine flame,  
A halo surrounded his head.  
In his upraised arm, a sharp sword,  
Belching fire, terrible to behold;  
Like a horde of lions immobilised  
Before a magician from above,  
Seeing him, the numberless men  
Fell silent, and bowed their head.*

*Heralded by the flashing sword,  
The Son of God opened his lips,  
To unveil his inmost thoughts,  
And volcanic words erupted:  
I wish to plunge this sword  
Into the heart of man;  
Dharma thirsts for sacrificial blood.*

*A hero issued out and said,  
Gem of Gurus! I shall die by sword  
To quench dharma's thirst,  
Thy blessing! Accept my offering!*

*A second hero advanced to meet  
The challenge. Taking him inside  
The Guru made the sacrifice.*

*This ordeal by Guru Gobind  
Was the origin of the Khalsa:  
The Way of the Illuminated Select.  
Like the Creator who out of five elements,  
Built the world, shining Khalsa too,*

*Was founded with five warriors,  
Dharma prospered, tyrants' might  
Trembled. Goddess Freedom smiled.  
Vikram: Seventeen fifty-six  
In the convened assembly sat,  
Guru Gobind on the regal throne  
A sight for gods:*

*A new life began for Bharat.  
The disciples all took dikhsha  
A sign of consecration.  
And the Guru said, "Dear Ones  
Nectar is the dikhsha you have taken.  
You are the strong ones with unshorn head.*

*The pledge of the iron band,  
The austere undergarment and the Sword.  
No king for you, God is your King  
The Rule of Law is the only law,  
The wrong doing your enemy.*

*Guru Gobind Singh's flag fluttered  
High above: the world cheered,  
The beginning of the end  
Of Aurangzeb's reign.*

Subramania Bharati

Tr: by Dr Prema Nandakumar.

The first to offer his head was Daya Ram, son of Mayia Ram and Sobha Devi, a *Kshatriya* family from Lahore. The second who came forward was Dharam Das, son of Param Sukh and Ananti of Hastinapur (Delhi) a *Jat* family devoted to the Guru. The third was Himmat Rai, son of Mal Deo and Lal Devi, a lowly *dhigar* caste (cooks and washermen) from Jagan Nath Puri in Orissa. The fourth was Mohkam Chand, son of Jagjiwan Ram and Sambhali from Dwarka in Kathiawar, who were tailors by profession. The fifth was Sahib Chand, son of Gurnarayan and Anukampa Devi from Bider in Central India, who were barbers by profession. Thus four of the five who offered their heads came from what were known as low



caste people. Everyone was surprised when they were brought out of the enclosure very much alive, and dressed like the Master, donning swords and having royal dignity like him. "These are my Five Beloved Elect (*Panj Pyaras*)" he said, "They have offered their head to me in body and spirit, and they shall be the embodiments of my body and Spirit, just as Angad was of Guru Nanak. My Spirit shall ever reside in the *Panj Pyaras*. They and all five who rise to their spiritual and moral heights shall be the embodiment of my Spirit.

## V

### Baptism of the Two-Edged Sword (*Khande-di-Pahul*)

Guru Gobind Singh first took a vessel full of water and performed the *Charan Pahnul* ceremony of Sikh baptism in it. He then sealed the vessel and ordered that it should be buried deep on the banks of the Satluj river indicating that he had performed the ceremony for the last time in it, and it should not be used for baptism by Sikhs anymore.<sup>10</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh then took an iron bowl made of shining steel and filled it with water. The Holy Mother (wife of the Guru) poured into it sugar cubes (*patashas*) at the request of Baba Gurbakhsh Singh (Ram Kocr) a descendant of the High Priest Baba Budha. Guru Gobind Singh then took a Two-Edged Sword and concentrating his attention in deep meditation, he stirred the water with the Two-Edged Sword, and while so doing recited five prayers: *Japji* of Guru Nanak; three compositions, *Jap*, *Swaiyas* (Ten from *Akal Ustat*) and *Kabio Bach Chaupai*, all composed by him; and *Anand Sahib* written by Guru Amar Das. These five compositions now form the five morning prayers of the Sikhs. When the baptismal water was ready he offered to each of the Five Elect to drink once by turn, signifying they were brothers in mind and spirit. Five times it was sprinkled on their eyes and five times it was poured on their heads, signifying that their outer and inner eyes, and their mind and consciousness were now transfigured into a new vision and new consciousness. Then Guru Gobind Singh imparted the *guru-mantram*, and thereby gave them his

Light and inner illumination. He transfigured them and raised them to his own spiritual heights. Thus they were really changed to a New Embodiment of his Personality. He called them the Khalsa (the Enlightened and the Pure) and they became the Knights Elect of the Khalsa Holy Order. He imparted to them the basic Sikh Code of Conduct which we shall discuss in detail in the next chapter.

## VI

### **The Guru became the Disciple and the Disciples became the Guru**

True to the great tradition of the Guru raising the disciple to the spiritual heights of his own status, Guru Gobind Singh not only changed these five disciples morally and spiritually, but elevated their spiritual dignity and authority above his own by bowing down before them and asking them to baptize him by the Two Edged Sword exactly in the manner he had done. Taken aback by the Guru's humility and eagerness to raise the status of the New Dispensation they baptized Guru Gobind Singh. The word Singh was to be the Sumame of the whole Brotherhood, and Guru Gobind Singh himself changed his name from Gobind Das to Gobind Singh from that day. This Brotherhood was to live as one family with God as their only Deity to be worshipped, and Guru Gobind Singh as their Father and Mata Sahib Devi as their Mother. All authority of the *Masands* was taken away. Five Sikhs baptized with the Two-Edged Sword they could turn out corrupt *Masands* and with the help of Sikh Congregations could take far-reaching decisions."

## VII

### **Brahmins and Hindu Rajas protest**

Shortly after the establishment of the Khalsa Holy Order a Brahmin visited Anandpur with many of his followers. He was shocked to find low caste people treated as equals and also taught Sanskrit and other forbidden studies. He felt insulted for being ignored and treated like ordinary visitors,

and not given privileged treatment. He lodged a strong protest and in the presence of Guru Gobind Singh cursed and condemned outright what he called the low-caste rabble, the Sikhs, who were treated better than the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Guru Gobind Singh calmly replied: "Do not blame me for ignoring you, for all are equal in my eyes. I will send you the bedding and other things you need, but do not say a word against my Beloved Elect, the Khalsa, my devoted Sikhs."<sup>12</sup> Then glorifying the Sikh people who were condemned by Kesho Dutt, the Brahmin as low caste rabble, he said:

*All the battles I have won against tyranny,  
I have fought with the devoted backing of these  
people,  
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts.  
Through their help I have escaped harm;  
The Love and generosity of the Sikhs  
Have enriched my heart and home.  
Through their grace I have acquired all learning;  
Through their help in battles, I have slain the enemies;  
I was born to serve them, through them I reached  
eminence.  
What would I have been without their kind and  
ready help?  
There are millions of insignificant people like me.  
True service is the service of the people;  
I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes.  
Charity will bear fruit in this and the next world  
If given to such worthy people as these.  
All other sacrifices and charity are profitless.  
From head to foot, whatever I call my own,  
All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people."<sup>13</sup>*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Dasm Granth*

Guru Gobind Singh wrote this unique "Song of the people" glorifying their innate strength and power nearly sixty years before Rousseau wrote his "Social Contract" and about 150 years before Marx formulated his Manifesto. It shows his great conviction and faith in the innate strength and demo-

cratic Will of the common man inspired by idealism. For his ideals it became a great social force and a cultural power. This song, and Guru Gobind Singh's New Social Order sounded the death knell of Brahmanism, caste prejudices, and severed once and for all the Sikh people from cultural dominance of Brahmanical faith. Guru Gobind Singh further writes: "The Brahmin on hearing this was ablaze with malice and started burning in wrath as a dry grass burns in fire."<sup>14</sup> And this attitude of malice, and subtle but bitter opposition of all that is most precious to Sikhism has been persistent among the bigoted Hindus, conscious of their Brahmanical superiority by the divine right of birth throughout centuries! On the other hand liberal Hindus have taken genuine pride in the service the Sikhs have rendered to their religion by defending it against oppression and tyranny a number of times in history. Many Hindu families in the Punjab permitted one member of their family to become a Sikh, and this strengthened the cultural bonds between the Sikhs and Hindus, which was disturbed only by the hate campaign of Arya Samajists against Sikhs, Muslims and Christians.

The Hindu Rajas of Shivalik Hills also were willing to accept the New Baptism of Guru Gobind Singh provided they were baptized separately and not along with men of low caste. Guru Gobind Singh refused saying: "Baptism was one, and it was for men and women of all castes, colour, and status. They shall have to get it along with the lowliest of the low who come for it. There would never be any discrimination of nationality, caste or colour, in baptism."

## VIII

### Reasons for introducing Baptism with Two-Edged Sword

Two reasons are generally given for Guru Gobind Singh's intentions of creating the Khalsa Holy Order. One by some nineteenth century Sikh chroniclers and the other by some non-Sikh Writers who wish to present the thesis, that Guru Gobind Singh completely departed from his predecessors particularly Guru Nanak. They wish to present the

theories have to be reinstated, Guru Gobind Singh is forgotten, or painted something quite different from the peaceful Guru Nanak; the Sikh Generals are thrown into oblivion, and denied their legitimate promotions to the highest posts, and the whole Sikh Community becomes a suspect. Guru Gobind Singh is dubbed as separatist, and so are his followers the Sikhs. Their most legitimate demands and rights are denied. Although in the past few decades, the Sikhs have repeatedly suffered from bad leadership whose selfishness and flights from responsibility have been the cause of great humiliation to them. The Sikh Community always feels that the Living and Eternal Presence of Guru Gobind Singh, their Father and Saviour is ever with them and through a process of inner germination and regeneration of the will the Guru's grace and spirit gives them power, strength and fearless self-confidence. They are firmly anchored to their destiny visualized by Guru Gobind Singh and they know that the sun will never set on them.

Guru Gobind Singh himself answers this question in his writings when he says: "Know Angad to be Nanak, know Amardas to be Angad, and Ram Das to be Amar Das and so on. Only ignorant fools consider them to be different; the enlightened saints and seers know them to be one and the same in Spirit."<sup>15</sup>

We find the answer to these questions in history and in the Writings of Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh and his contemporaries tell us that there were a number of reasons which impelled Guru Gobind Singh to introduce the Baptism of the *Two-Edged Sword*:

(1) *Divine Will and Command of God to Create a Community of Righteous Men.* We have already quoted from Guru Gobind Singh's Autobiography in which he clearly states that God had sent him to continue the mission of Guru Nanak, and take it to the culmination point of creating a Panth (A Nation) of Righteous men. God commanded him to create a self-sufficient and autonomous Community of Righteous men.

(2) *To fight for Justice, Freedom and Righteousness.*

(3) *To chastise tyrants and despots.*<sup>16</sup> In this mandate there is a clear indication that Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa according to the Will of God to uphold continuously in history the historic traditions of Enlightenment and Freedom for which he was born and for which he sacrificed all his children, his father and mother and even the best of his disciples. This interpretation of his mission is further supported by contemporary poets like Sainapati, and Bhai Nand Lal.

(4) *Elimination of the Masand Missionary System.* We have noticed that the Sikh missionaries known as the *Masands* had started misusing the authority delegated to them by the Gurus. They had by the time of Guru Gobind Singh become thoroughly greedy and corrupt and notoriously dangerous for the very existence of Sikhism. In his composition, *Thirty Three Swaiyas*, on which we are commenting in the next chapter, Guru Gobind Singh gives the definition of the Khalsa and throws considerable light on the Sikh Code of Conduct. As it was written immediately after the Khalsa was Ordained as Holy Order, we find very angry comments on the *Masands* from the pen of Guru Gobind Singh. The Master comments:

*The masands tell their innocent and devout followers, "Make all sacramental offerings to us; whatever money or saving you have at home bring it to us for your salvation. Meditate on our images and remember our name because we are the holiest of the holy. Without offering of money and possession one finds it difficult to please these masands (29). In order to show they are moved to tears by thoughts of God, they apply oil to their eyes, shed false tears in order to emotionally overpower people. When they see a rich man they readily accept his hospitality and eat sumptuous food and offer prayers for him; but they show contempt for the poor people and would not show their faces even when they are courteously invited. These human animals swindle, loot and plunder the innocent and never really remember God. They close their eyes like hypocritical cranes ready to pounce on some*

*fish in the river. All their show of piety is sheer sychophancy. They bow low in false humility and cunning like a hunter ready to shoot his prey. Even a cat, expert in catching rats, with all stealth feels ashamed of the cunning and hypocrisy of these masands, who close their eyes, pose as saints, sit in samadhi, only to exploit and plunder innocent people."*<sup>30</sup>

Thus Guru Gobind Singh vividly portrays the character of these masands and indicts them of treachery, hypocrisy and exploitation of the poor mercilessly.<sup>17</sup>

After the Khalsa was ordained Guru Gobind Singh issued letters that any Five Sikhs of the Khalsa Holy Order could take action against any *masand* and turn him out of the religious centre. But he repeatedly asks the Khalsa to be compassionate and forgive those who show repentance. Authority from all individuals acting as dictatorial missionaries was taken away. Sainapati, Poet of Guru Gobind Singh's *Durbar* says:

*According to the Will of God,  
The true Guru ordained the Khalsa;  
By creating the Khalsa Holy Order  
He eliminated the masands, 148  
Contemplate the Name of God,  
Be free from all bondage;  
Be a Khalsa of the Guru,  
And turn your back on masands 162*<sup>18</sup>

(5) *No Individual shall Exercise Religious or Political Authority over the Sikh Panth.* The main aim of creating the Khalsa was to give democratic ideals as the basis of all further religious and political leadership of the Sikhs. No individual was to ever act as Pope, or Dictator or a Monarch, and whenever this sacred principle of Sikh polity has been flouted, the Sikhs have suffered tremendously, and great achievements and victories have been turned to grave disasters. Koer Singh, author of an old *Gurbilas* (Biography of Guru Gobind Singh), who was with Bhai Mani Singh during the last days in prison, before he suffered martyrdom, reports a sermon

of Guru Gobind Singh delivered just before the Master's ascension thus:

*These are not the times to bestow power and authority exclusively on One Person, who may become a selfish leader and misuse his authority to put into the bondage of his dictatorship all the people. (Svarain swarath apne jahi, bandhan karai lok sabh tahi). People have the tendency to adopt those false gurus and hypocrites as divine teachers who display wealth and pretend to have some magical powers. They are devoid of peace and enlightenment. They care not for the moral and spiritual values. They only look for material success and prosperity. They are guided by selfish motives. You will see gurus emerging everywhere and running to the houses of the people in search of followers. When they quarrel with one guru they will go to another. Thus corruption will creep into religious places. People will call themselves saints but the minds of these saints would be obsessed with greed and lust. So now you shall worship the Holy Adi Granth as the living embodiment of My Presence.*

Guru Nanak during his life time told Bhai Budha, Master of Ceremonies (who anointed the five successors of Guru Nanak) that "My Light shall continue to manifest itself in 10 Forms. While your descendents shall continue to be the High Priests of the subsequent Gurus. After the tenth Guru there shall be no human successor.<sup>19</sup> Now that the prophecy of Guru Nanak has come true, the whole Sikh community is the Khalsa Sangat. I have placed the Khalsa in the arms of the Almighty Wielder of the Supreme Sword (Sri Asketu) God. The Khalsa should hold in his heart the Word of God as my Living Presence." Then said Guru Gobind Singh to the disciples attending him, "Take me to the Presence of the Primal Satguru (the Holy Adi Granth). When the Master was in the Presence of the Holy Book, he stood up and took in his hand five paissa and coconut, and circumambulated around the



Adi Granth three times; he then placed the five paisa and coconut before the Holy Book, and prostrated before it and then said, with a rare glow on his face, "I declare fearlessly and in unambiguous terms that from this day onwards my disciples should know no other Guru besides the Holy Adi Granth. Whoever wishes to talk to me should study and read the Adi Granth. The Khalsa is the real Sangat (Congregation of the Guru) and this Sangat is my visible and human form. Let the Khalsa imbibe my teachings in their heart and live sincerely according to the Sikh Code of Conduct. I shall ever be with such a Sikh in mind and spirit."<sup>20</sup>

Thus Guru Gobind Singh introduced the New Baptism to disqualify all pretender and imposter gurus and *masands* as legitimate teachers of Sikhism, and to prevent any individual among the Sikhs emerging as a New Messiah, Guru, or Pope of the Sikhs.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Throughout the Guru period of Sikh history the Mughal records addressed the Sikh Community as Nanak-prast or Nanak Panthis.
2. Then came Guru Nanak to Kartarpur,  
He discarded all his garb of mendicants,  
Now wearing ordinary worldly clothes (*samsarik kapde*)  
He established his pontifical throne.  
Bhai Gurdas Var 1:38
3. (i) *Mehma Prakash* p.29.  
(ii) *Puratan Janam Sakhi* p.127.
4. The Word is the Guru, and the Guru is the Word;  
The divine word is brimming with the Nectar of Life.  
If the disciple acts on whatever the Word of the Guru teaches,  
He shall certainly be exalted and liberated.  
Adi Granth G. Ram Das, Na:
5. *Adi Granth*, Nanak, Var Majh, p.145.
6. *Adi Granth*, Angad, Malar, p.1288.
7. It was 27th March during the life-time of Guru Amar Das and it is 13th April now and it shall be 14th April within a few years.
8. Indubhushan Bannerjee: *Evolution of the Khasala*, p.182.
9. Duncan Greenless: *The Gospel of Guru Granth*: CVI

10. Sarup Das Bhalla: *Mehma Prakash*, Sakhi 226-3.
11. Innumerable letters of Guru Gobind Singh are now available in which he has asked the Khalsa Sangat of various places to wrest control from the masands, but to be not too harsh with them. Those who accepted the Khalsa Holy Order were to be included in the New Holy Order but they could not continue as missionaries with special delegated authority. That was now with the Khalsa Sangat where the collective majority decisions were to prevail.
12. *Dasam Granth* (Writings of Guru Gobind Singh): Shahads : 11
13. This well known shabad from *Dasam Granth* starts with the line:  
*Inhi ki kripa se sajai ham hai;*
14. *catpatae cit mai jario; trin jion krudhit hoe*  
Guru Gobind Singh: *Dasam Granth*
15. *Bachiter Natak* (Autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh) Ch5: 10.
16. *Bachiter Natak*; Chapter 6, 29, 42.
17. Guru Gobind Singh: *Tei* (33) *Swaiyas*: 29, 30.
18. Kavi Sainapati, *Gursobha Granth*, 148, 162.
19. This prophecy is supported by two documents:  
(i) Bhai Gurdas in his Var 1, pauri 48 says that the Sikhs asked Guru Harogbind: "Master, we see you as the Sixth Form of Guru Nanak, How many more Gurus will there be. The Omniscient Guru replied: The Foundation of the Sikh Panth is Eternal, but there shall be Two plus Two (Four) Gurus." The question arises, why did the Guru say Two plus Two? It is because he wanted to indicate that there will be two pairs. The first Father and Son pair was Guru Hari Rai and Guru Hari Krishan, and the second Father and Son pair was Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh.  
(ii) Mangal Singh: *Jivan Baba Budha*, 32.
20. Koer Singh: *Gurbilas Patshahi Das* p.183-4.

## CHAPTER 4

### SYMBOLISM AND INTERPRETATION OF BAPTISM WITH THE TWO-EDGED SWORD

#### **Khanda-di-Pahul-Amrit**

*The Khalsa is my paramount Image,  
In the Khalsa ever resides my Spirit.  
The Khalsa is my Beloved and Venerable Master;  
The Khalsa is my divine Protector,  
The Khalsa is my Father and Mother;  
The Khalsa is my Body and Soul.  
The Khalsa is embodiment of the True and Perfect  
Guru.  
The Khalsa is my Gallant and Knightly Friend.  
I have stated the Truth without an iota of  
misconstruction.  
God and Guru Nanak are to this my witnesses.  
Guru Gobind Singh: Sarb Loh Granth (MS)<sup>1</sup>*

#### I

#### **Symbolism of the New Dispensation**

(1) *The Meaning of Religious Symbolism.* A Symbol is a particular type of sign: a sensible reality that betokens that which cannot be directly perceived, or adequately described by abstract principles. The symbol, by its suggestive capacity, thus discloses something that men could not otherwise know, at least with the same richness and power. The meaning of a religious symbol is grasped not by discursive reasoning but by a kind of synthetic insight. Frequently symbols do not have any determinate meaning, but evoke a gamut of related significance.

'Symbolism derives its powers from the fact that it speaks not only to the reflective intelligence but to the entire human psyche. It arouses deep, emotional experiences, releases hidden energies in the soul, gives strength and stability to the personality, establishes strong loyalties, and disposes a man for consistent and committed action. By reason of these properties symbols are of great importance not only in religion but also in art, literature and politics. Thus a symbol reminds the beholder of a particular idea associated with it.'

The religious symbol points beyond itself to reality, participates in its power, and makes intelligible its meaning. The value of a symbol is its ability to elucidate, to compress into a simple and meaningful whole to provide a centre for shaping of conduct and belief. Symbols are part of the language of faith, the means by which faith expresses itself when it interprets the holy, the eternal, the beyond, and when it communicates the divine confrontations, claims and demands. Symbolism is thus the vehicle of revelation of the Unknown to the known. Born in encounter, given during inspiration, symbols summarize and interpret the experience. They grow and live with renewed inspiration and changing circumstances. At times they appear out of date, but with the change in historical circumstances, and by bringing to light their innate interpretation, their significance emerges with new meaning.

The Cross of the Christians has become a symbol of crisis to be faced, burden to be carried, suffering and patience and salvation, and it is impossible to interpret Christ without the Cross. In the same way Guru Gobind Singh introduced a number of things, notably, the Sword, (*Tegh* or *Khadag*), which is not just a weapon in the ordinary sense but much more than that. For him it is the very Image of God, and even another Name of God, as it symbolizes Justice and Freedom. This interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh's Sword is given throughout his writings. But people who have never read the writings of Guru Gobind Singh with the insight and linguistic equipment it requires, not only misinterpret these powerfully sustaining symbols, but degrade themselves by exposing their own shallow knowledge to ridicule. Before we study the symbolic meaning

of many things introduced by the Gurus, we must bear in mind that religious symbols function within a living religious texture. They are never related merely to man's rational, economic or social existence, but to his total orientation of life. This means that religious symbols cannot be invented or discarded at will.

(2) *The Five Instruments of the New Dispensation*. We have seen that when Guru Gobind Singh introduced the Baptism with Two-Edged Sword he used five instruments of baptism, each having a distinct symbolic meaning and mystic purpose which we will now discuss in detail: The following are the five instruments and ingredients of Baptism with the Two-Edged-Sword:

- (1) All-Steel (*Sarb-Loh*) Bowl
- (2) All-Steel (*Sarb-Loh*) Two-Edged Sword (*Khanda*)
- (3) Water
- (4) Sugar-pellets (*putasha*)
- (5) Five Prayers from Sacred Scriptures:
  - i *Japji* (40 verses) by Guru Nanak.
  - ii *Jap* (199 verses) by Guru Gobind Singh.
  - iii *Sudha Swaiyas* (10 verses) by Guru Gobind Singh.
  - iv *Kabio-bach-bemi-Chaupai* (25 verses) by Guru Gobind Singh.
  - v *Anand* (40 verses) by Guru Amar Das.

3. *Concept of the All-Steel (Sarb-Loh)*: We find that Guru Gobind Singh insisted on using only All-Steel bowl, and All-Steel Two-Edged Sword, and the Sikhs were enjoined to wear an All-Steel Bracelet (*Kara*) an All-Steel miniature Sword (*Kirpan*). This is because the word All-Steel (*Sarb-Loh*) has a special significance in Guru Gobind Singh's Writings.

Commenting purely from a Westerner's point of view Edmund Candler says, "When Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the sacrament of the Steel, he proved himself a wise and far-sighted leader. For of all the material things which genius has inspired with spiritual significance, steel is the truest and most uncompromising. To the Khalsa it gave a cause and welded them into a nation, and in the dark days of Mohammedan rule in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Sikh was slain

at sight, and no quarter was given, it drove them on those gallant crusades in which they rode to Amritsar in the dead of the night, leapt into the sacred tank and out again, and galloped back through the enemies' lines purified. Hundreds were slain but not one abjured his faith or perjured his soul to preserve the muddy vesture of clay."<sup>2</sup>

According to Evola in *La tradizione eremetica*, "Steel denotes the transcendent toughness of the principle of the all conquering Spirit."<sup>3</sup> The Romans believed that iron, because of its association with Mars, was capable of warding off evil spirits. The belief still persists in Scotland and India. It is a symbol of mental power, effective in the preservation and defence of human life. Guru Gobind Singh in his Proem to his famous composition *Akal Ustat*, out of which *Ten Swaiyas* used in baptism are selected, as the third prayer, writes:

*I take refuge in the Eternal Being (Akal Purkh)*

*I take refuge in Him who is All-Steel (Sarab-Loh)*  
*Akal Ustat.*

For Guru Gobind Singh, All-Steel was the Almighty and Infallible God, the Unconquerable Transcendent Spirit, and Steel for him was a symbol of firmness, iron-will, grit, stoic determination at the mental plane, and it was a symbol of moral fibre, courage of conviction, self-restraint and unflinching faith at the moral and spiritual plane. That is the reason why Steel is the ideal metal for Guru Gobind Singh.

4. *The Steel Bowl*: (*Sarb Loh Bata*: The Elixir of Life (*Amrit*) is the name given to baptismal water after preparation. When we say *Amrit*, we shall mean fully prepared baptismal-water. Guru Gobind Singh felt that only a Steel Bowl could hold this Elixir of Life. No other metal had this humility, simplicity and unshakable strength. The ceremony cannot be conducted in a bowl of silver, gold, copper or bronze. It must be All-Steel. "If the iron be blunt, and one does not whet the edge, then must he put in more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct." (Eccles X. 10)<sup>4</sup>. Iron is the energy of the human will and the strength it needs can be supplied only by divine Wisdom. Thus Steel was chosen by Guru Gobind Singh as the

metal of the Chalice or the Communion-cup of the Water of Immortality (*Amrit*).

5. *Water*. Into the bowl the *Panj-Pyaras* (the Five Beloved Ones, the Five Blessed Sikhs who administer baptism) pour clean and fresh water, which, when the ceremony is complete becomes the Water of Immortality. In Guru Nanak's *Japji Vital Breath (Pavan)* is the Guru, the Lord of Life, and Water (*Pani*) is the Father of human existence. "Water was therefore to be the medium of the divine Spirit. Why Water?

"Water is the source of all life; in water all potentialities are contained and in it all seeds survive. Water of life is the symbol of creation, harbour of all seeds. Water purifies, heals, restores youth and ensures eternal life. Why should not that which produces life from the earth also give the life of heaven? Therefore all natural water, because of the ancient privilege with which it was honoured from the first, gains the power of sanctifying the sacrament, as long as God is invoked to that effect. What cleans the body now cleans the soul. What gave sustenance in time now gives divine power and immortality in eternity. "Waters denote truths, specifically natural truths which are knowledge from the Word."<sup>5</sup>

"Water is thus great symbol of Truth or the eternal Reality and source of all manifestation. Water suggests unity, absence of parts, comprehensiveness, purity, motion; also disappearance in evaporation below, and outpouring from above in rain to fertilize the earth."<sup>6</sup> "In the beginning this world was water. Water produced the True and the true is Brahm."<sup>7</sup> "The text in Rev. xxii. 17 speaks of earthly water. No doubt the words "Water of life" had a spiritual and mystic meaning already among the heathens of the East — Greeks and barbarians alike. And water — with its life-giving and refreshing powers, what better symbol could be found for that which would keep off death?"<sup>8</sup>

(5) *Sugar Pellets: (Patashas)*: We have already stated the historical fact that when Guru Gobind Singh, the Father of the Khalsa Brotherhood, was about to prepare the Baptismal Water, the Holy Mother of the Sikhs considered it her bounden



duty to pour her share into it. She was also to have a share in the Five Ks to be discussed later. She poured sugar pellets (*patashus*) into the Water, because the baptismal Water was not only to be a sacrament for men but also for women, who had so far enjoyed absolutely equal rights in Sikh society ever since the Religion was founded by Guru Nanak. The feminine grace, the beauty of a woman's soul, the love of the Mother was to be symbolically poured in the form of sugar which when mixed with Water would become the Milk of life. While Steel and the Two-Edged-Sword were to instil valour, fearlessness, and the fiery pacifism of an unconquerable Spirit, the sugar was to instil feminine grace, tenderness, sweetness and humane compassion.

(6) *The Two Edged Sword (Khanda)*: Guru Gobind Singh has given an illuminating and clear interpretation of the Two-Edged Sword (*Khanda*) in the second verse of his famous *Bhagauti-ki-Var*: The first hymn of this very composition forms the Invocatory Prayer (*Ardasa*) of the Sikhs, which is now used as Congregational Prayer. In the second hymn of this composition, Guru Gobind Singh interprets the Divine Two-Edged-Sword in metaphysical terms:

*God first created the Two-Edged Sword,  
And then he manifested the whole phenomenal world  
(samsara)  
He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva,  
As divine Instruments of creation.  
And thus He created the playful drama of Nature  
(Kudrat).<sup>9</sup>*

Thus the Two-Edged-Sword is the symbol of the Primal and Sovereign Power of God which controls the destiny of the whole creation. The two edges of the Two-Edged-Sword symbolize: (1) the Creative Power of Life and its sovereign strength, its immortality that can never be overpowered, (2) the Power of Chastisement and Justice which protects truth, and all those who believe in God and truth. These two powers of the Two-Edged-Sword, that is God, act not only between the life span of birth and death, but even beyond death, where



martyrs live in glory and victory, and the tyrants and the wicked suffer for their deeds. We shall discuss this in greater detail in the sixth chapter of this book.

7. *The Five Prayers.* The most vital part of the Baptism ceremony are these five prayers which are recited in intoned meditative recitation (i) *Japji* is a composition of Guru Nanak of 40 verses. Its opening Invocation forms the *Mula-Mantra* (Fundamental Article of Faith), wherewith the Holy Book of the Sikhs commences, placing as its foundation the Unicity of God, the Name of God as Eternal Truth, the attributes of God Unborn, Fearless, Immortal, Creator, Supreme and attained by the Grace of the Guru, the Perfect Teacher. Commenting on the will of God, the understanding of which is key to higher revelation, the necessity of the Guru who illumines the seeker with the Divine Name, which must be contemplated early in the morning Guru Nanak traces the mystic path of meditation in three stages: (1) *Sravanan* (*suniyai*), inward hearing of the Name while contemplating it (2) *fannanan* (*maniyai*), inward communion with the Named One. (3) *Nidhiyasana* (*Panch parvan*), the state of Divine Elect.

Then reflecting on the splendour and majesty of God in all its wondrous manifestations, Guru Nanak outlines the ethics of burning austerity, discipline, patience, fear of God transformed to love of God; he then traces the five stages of spiritual illumination, the last two of which are the Plane of Grace and the Plane of Truth. The actions of those who reach this state are filled with omnipotent grace and everything they do is filled with the love and power of God. The Plane of Truth is God's own Home, where He alone abides in eternal bliss and all who reach that plane are one with him.

(ii) *The Jap* is a composition of Guru Gobind Singh of 199 verses. In this composition the doctrines vanish, the mystery unveils and God is revealed as a living Presence felt right in front of us. The opening verse gives the essence of the whole *Jap*.

*Marks and symbols, caste and class,  
Or lineage God hath none;  
His form and hue, shape and garb,*

*Cannot be described by anyone;  
 Immovable is His Being.  
 Self-luminous, He shines in His splendour;  
 Limitless is His power.  
 He is the King of kings, the lordly Indra  
 Of countless Indras; the supreme Sovereign  
 Of the three worlds of gods, men and demons;  
 Nay, even the grass blades of the woodland  
 Say: "He is Infinite, He is Infinite."  
 O Lord, who can count Thy names?  
 Thy Names relating Thy deeds I will state,  
 Through Thy wisdom and grace.<sup>10</sup>*

In the Jap of Guru Gobind Singh, God is revealed against the background of the resplendent Light of His Spirit. He is many and yet One. He is Beauty and Truth. He is the Chastiser and Merciful. He is Light of all prophets, King of kings, and Mother of Universe.

(iii) *Sudha Swaiyas*. The ten swaiyas recited in the Baptism ceremony are from *Akal Ustat* 30-40, of Guru Gobind Singh. The word *Sudha* means *Amrit* (Nectar), and after Guru Gobind Singh used them in baptism ceremony they are called *Sudha Swaiyas* (Ambrosial Quatrains). The theme of all the ten is that all other paths to God except that of Love are futile and all other achievements of political power and glory are useless if the love of God is not achieved. There is a prophetic hope and vision which emphatically states that a day will come when tyrants and despots will either go to the grave or worship God. The Noble and the Enlightened shall walk the earth without fear which oppresses everyone today.

*Titans, tyrants and saints,  
 Night walkers and serpents-kings  
 Of the past and the present.  
 Even those that in future be,  
 Will one and all worship Thee.  
 Creatures on land, earth and sea,  
 Erelong will adore and contemplate Thee.  
 Virtue will walk in resplendent glory.*

*With trumpet sounds of victory.  
 All hordes of the wicked and dissolute  
 Will be crushed and destroyed from the root.  
 The virtuous and the noble shall ever dwell  
 In freedom and peaceful contentedness.  
 The perverse on seeing the victory of Truth and God,  
 Will quail in agony and bewail their lot.<sup>11</sup>*

iv. *Kabio bac Benti Chaupai: The Poet's Prayer in Chaupai: Quatrains.* This is a composition of Guru Gobind Singh consisting of 25 quatrains. The chaupai quatrains differ from Swayiās in the number of syllables. Both have four lines each. It is a Prayer written by Guru Gobind Singh on the quiet hillock on the bank of Satluj at Bhanbaur, a few miles from Anandpur when Aurangzeb ordered Prince Muazzam to attack Anandpur with an army of 5 lakhs (500,000). With the exception of his devoted disciples everyone was unnerved. It is a prayer invoking grace, power and protection of God in moments of crisis.

*O Lord, Wielder of the Supreme Sword.  
 I take refuge at Thy Feet;  
 Protect me with Thy Saving Hand of Grace,  
 Help me at all moments and all places.  
 Save me from the onslaught of tyrants and despots.<sup>12</sup>*

(v) *Anand.* This is a composition of Guru Amar Das. The theme is life of contemplation which begins with seeking the peace-shedding Presence of the Guru and tells us how to attain concentration (*ekagarta* or *sachi liv*: true absorption) and it takes us to the highest state in the last verse (40) where in the illumination achieved at the feet of the True Guru, the Unstruck Music (*Anhada Shabad* or *Tur*) is heard in the transcendent state. Every verse when recited is introspectively addressed to the mind and self: "Listen my mind," "Hearken my soul." We give one hymn:

*O mine eyes, the Lord has placed  
 His Light within thee,  
 Look on none but Him,  
 Look on none but the Lord.  
 By His grace will you see Him.*

*The world which appears so poisonous to you,  
Is the manifestation of God.  
When by the grace of the Guru,  
I was granted understanding.  
I saw that there is One God.  
I saw there is no other besides Him,  
Says Nanak: These eyes of mine were blind,  
But when I met the True Guru,  
They were graced with divine Light.<sup>13</sup>*

Thus the five instruments of Dispensation and the five Prayers blend into the Baptismal Water called the *Anrit*: the Elixir of Life or the Water of Immortality. Bhai Mani Singh gives a novel symbolic interpretation in broader terms. He divides the Baptism into three parts (1) The Five Prayers which symbolize the divine power and grace, and essentially the *Anrit* spirit. (2) The *Two-Edged-Sword*, which symbolizes the Heroic Inspiration (*Vir Rasa*), the Kshatriya Spirit of dying for Righteousness and Freedom. (3) *Water*, represents Nature, or life in Nature (*samsara*). Bhai Mani Singh adds that corresponding to these three essential elements in human life which in the life of a Sikh must remain in a balanced form, Guru Gobind Singh wrote three types of Literary Compositions, each having a distinct purpose:

- (1) *Anrit-mai Bani*: Writings of spiritual and philosophic themes.
- (2) *Judha-mai-Bani*: Writings of Historical themes inspiring the will to die for dharma (righteousness). This includes his own Autobiography.
- (3) *Sansarmai Bani*: Writings of human nature about Society, Women, and Sex Psychology. This statement of Bhai Mani Singh not only throws light on the symbolism of the instruments of baptism but is historical evidence of Bhai Mani Singh, who compiled the first Volume of *Dasm Granth* after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, that all types of compositions included in the *Dasm Granth* are the Writings of Guru Gobind Singh. We should not expect one type of Bani to resemble the other type.

## II

### How is the Baptism conducted

(1) **Who is Eligible to be Baptized:** Baptism is not merely a conversion ceremony, but it has a positive purpose to bring about a complete change, a new life. It is illumination of the Spirit. If it does not in any way inwardly alter the very being of the recipient's soul, there is then something wrong either with the recipient or with those who administer the baptism. The novice or recipient should fulfil the following conditions:

(i) Any man (or woman) above the age of sixteen, belonging to any race, nationality, speaking any language is eligible for receiving the baptism but he should be fully conversant with the discipline of a baptized Sikh, and be physically and mentally equipped before he receives the ordination.

(ii) The recipient should be at least of the age of 16, and able to understand and read Sikh prayers. If he is illiterate he shall have to arrange to hear the prayers read, and then memorize them.

(iii) Infants or boys and girls less than 16 years can be baptized only if their parents take full responsibility of educating and training them in the Sikh Code of Conduct and prevent them from committing any acts of apostasy in ignorance.

(iv) Novices who are either completely ignorant of Sikh traditions or were non-Sikhs before seeking Khalsa baptism, should undergo at least three years of training and disciplining before becoming eligible for the baptism. Those novices who are baptized without necessary preparations or knowledge and training in daily Sikh Prayers and conduct, generally never grasp the Spirit of Sikhism and after undergoing formal conversion or confirmation tend to transgress all the basic tenets of the Sikh Code of Conduct. Thus many from other religions who hastily seek baptism without necessary preparations, relapse into their old habits of drinking and smoking.

(v) On the day a novice is to be baptized he should take a bath (wash his body and hair), wear absolutely clean clothes and have with him what are called the five Ks (1) *Kesha*: uncut

Har (2) *Kanga*: Comb (3) *Kirpan*: sword of about 6 inches (4) *Kara*: bracelet (5) *Kach*: Drawer of special type. The hair should be tied as tress-knot on the head and the turban tied on it gracefully.

Before the ceremony starts every recipient has to present himself before the Five Ministers (*Panj Pyarast*) in the presence of the Holy Book and take a vow that he will dedicate his mind, body and soul to the Ten Gurus and the Sikh Panth. If he does not qualify himself for baptism for some reason or the other, he is told about it, and is advised to come again when he is fully prepared.

## **(2) Who is Competent to Administer Baptism?**

There is no distinction between a layman and ordained member of the Khalsa Holy Order in Sikhism. Every baptized Sikh who lives strictly according to the Sikh Code of Conduct is competent to administer baptism. He shall have to submit himself to scrutiny by five Sikhs competent to do so, and confess the truth and the whole truth about his inner life. The minimum conditions which a Minister of Baptism requires are five. He must assure on oath that:

- (i) he has not committed any of the four acts of apostasy.
- (ii) he has not taken any wine, spirit, hemp or any drug.
- (iii) he has been reciting his prayers regularly.
- (iv) he has not committed any sin like theft nor indulged in any criminal activity.
- (v) he is physically complete, mentally balanced. Physically complete means that none of his limbs should be maimed or missing. Even a person whose little finger has been amputated is physically incomplete. This doctrine will be better explained in the next chapter.

Before the ceremony begins everyone of the Five selected by the Congregation is scrutinized. If it is found that he has transgressed any of the moral principles, he is rejected. Another person has to be selected. Before a person accepts the duty of administering baptism he must take a bath, wash his hair. All the five selected wear traditional robes. Women can administer baptism. Out of the five some may be men, others may be

women. The third Guru, Amar Das appointed women missionaries and priests even in such remote Muslim areas like Kabul. Choice was always based on ability and character and not on the basis of age or sex.

### III

#### **Preparation of Baptismal Water (Amrit: the Elixir of Life)**

On the altar of the Sikh Temple one always sees the *Adi Guru Granth*: the Holy Book of the Sikhs. In front of the Holy Book all things required for the ceremony of baptism are placed: steel bowl, water, sugar pellets, Two-Edged Sword; and the sacramental food (*karah prashad*) is kept on one side to be distributed after the ceremony is over. Around the Steel Bowl stand the five Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*), the Five Beloved Ones as they are called, and behind them in a semi-circle stand all the novices. Men and women, boys and girls stand in one row. Segregating the women as the Muslims do in the Mosque is a social sin and intolerable discrimination.

The Five Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*) stand with folded hands and first say the Invocation Prayer (*Ardasa*), seeking the grace and power of God and the Guru to help in the ceremony by His Presence and divine aid. (For translation of Invocation Prayer see Appendix I). A person who during the prayer waves a *chowrie* over the Holy Book, reads the first hymn on the top of left hand page. This hymn is generally called the *Hukam* (the Hymn indicating the divine Will or Command in answer to the prayers). I have seen Muslims and Christians seeking answers to their prayers from the Koran and Bible in the same way.

The five Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*) then start the ceremony with the utmost reverence. They pour the water into the bowl, and then they put some sugar pellets into the water uttering the Name of God while doing so. All the five sit round the bowl in *Vir-asana*: (sitting in the pose of an archer ready to let loose an arrow) everyone placing both his hands on the edge of the bowl, clasping it lightly but firmly. From right to left the five Ministers then recite in deep meditative tone from memory, the five prayers, one each by turn.<sup>12</sup> Each Minister

while reciting the prayer holds the Two-Edged Sword in his right hand keeps on churning the water while he keeps his left hand on the bowl. After he has completed the prayer he hands over the Two-Edged Sword to the next Minister. While the prayer is recited the Minister's meditative attention should be on the baptismal water. The magnetism of their personality, and the transmuting power of the divine Word passes through their concentration to the baptismal water. The grace and power of the divine Word actually changes this natural water to the Water of Immortality (*Amrit*). When all the recitations are over the five Ministers stand up holding the Steel Bowl of baptismal water in their hands and once more say the Invocational Prayer (*Ardasa*). It is a prayer of thanksgiving and seeking the grace and blessings of God for those who are about to receive the baptism.

#### IV

##### Initiating the Novices

Each novice then comes forward by turn to accept the baptism. He sits with folded and cupped hands ready to receive the baptism from the Panj Pyaras, because all sacraments should be received with clean hands and with utter humility and reverence:

(i) Each of the five Ministers first pours a little baptismal water (*Amrit*) in the cupped hands of the novice and asks him to drink it and then utter after drinking each time:

*Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa*

*Vah-Guru ji ki Fateh*

The Khalsa is dedicated to God.

Victory ever is of the Almighty Lord.

This is the Sikh salutation which the Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*) ask the neophyte to utter everytime they offer him baptismal water or sprinkle on his eyes or head. The symbolic meaning of this is that from the day of initiation onwards, he should eat and partake of nothing that is earned or motivated by evil means.

(ii) Then each of the five Ministers sprinkle baptismal water on the eyes of the neophyte and he again repeats each



time *Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa, Vah-Guru ji ki Fateh*. The sprinkling of the *Amrit* (baptismal Water) on the neophyte's eyes symbolizes that from that day onwards the baptized Sikh shall see no evil and as the *Anand* Prayer states: "O mine eyes, in you reside the supreme Light," he should concentrate his attention in visualizing the supreme Light. From darkness he must turn to Light.

(iii) Then each of the Five Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*) pours the *Amrit* with his right hand on the uppermost tip of the neophyte's head, and he is again asked to utter each time the divine Name *Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa; Vah-Guru-ji-ki-Fateh*. The head is the seat of Transcendent Consciousness and all spiritual illumination is attained in the innermost recesses of the mind and head, called *mastak*. (iv) Then each of the *Panj Pyaras* (Ministers) imparts into the ear of the neophyte the divine Name (*Vah-Guru*) and discipline him in the contemplative remembrance (*Simrin*) of the Name. Thus the Word of God is planted in his heart and soul and if the heart is ready soil to receive it, then it will sprout and bloom into the highest illumination.

(v) The Ministers (*Panj Pyaras*) then carry the Bowl of baptismal Water (*Amrit*) to all the neophytes as they keep standing in a semi-circle, and each is offered to drink from it first from the right to the left and then from the left to the right. It is quite possible that some of those who are being initiated are Brahmins, some *parhias*, some Muslims, some very rich and even Maharaja, and some very poor, possibly a labourer living from hand to mouth. They are made to feel brothers in spirit, brothers in social life, and equal in society and before God. They must now learn to eat and drink from the same kitchen, and if necessary eat from the same plate. All the neophytes are told that they now have a new birth, and new spiritual life and a new social consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

## V

### Moral and Spiritual Instructions (Rehat:)

The following are moral and spiritual instructions which

form the basic Sikh Code of Conduct called the *Rehat* (Principles of Righteous Living).

(1) You shall believe only in One God. Besides one God you shall not pay any homage to gods and goddesses of any faith, nor worship any idol or image of any deity. You should not worship tombs or graves of any Saint, nor any sepulchre, cenotaph or mausoleum.

(2) You shall believe in the Ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh as the only prophets of Sikh Faith, and also acknowledge *Adi Guru Granth* as the Living Guru. Any human being claiming to be the living successor of the ten Gurus is to be rejected as impostor and hypocrite trying to harm the basic doctrines of the Khalsa Holy Order; such a man and his followers should be treated as recusants, and recidivists and their teaching repudiated.

(3) You shall believe in *Adi Guru Granth* as your Holy Scripture and the embodiment of the Spirit of all the Ten Gurus. The spiritual Writings of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Nand Lal, Bhai Gurdas should be treated as canonised scriptures (*Pramanik Bani*).

(4) Your *Mul-Mantram*, Fundamental Article of Faith and Worship is:

*One God pervadeth all.  
Eternal Truth is His Name.  
Creator of all things.  
Fearing nothing and at enmity with none  
Timeless is His Image;  
Not begotten, being of His own Being;  
By the grace of the Gurn revealed to men.*<sup>14</sup>

(5) Your *Gur-mantram*, the divine Name which you should contemplate every morning or at any other time of solitude is "*Vah-Guru*" (Wondrous art Thou O Enlightener of Soul). Every morning you should rise up, take your bath and sit in *Simrin*: Contemplation.<sup>15</sup>

*Comments: Simrin* in Sikhism is exactly the same thing

as *dhikr* in Sufism. As a matter of fact Bhai Nand Lal in his works on Sikhism uses the word *dhikr* (pronounced *Zikr*) for *Simrin*, thereby indicating complete identity. Both *Simrin* and *dhikr* mean "recollection or remembrance." Both *Simrin* and *dhikr* are spiritual exercises designed to render God's presence throughout one's being. There are a number of methods employed such as rhythmical repetitive invocation of God's Names to attain spiritual concentration.

6. After meditation before dawn you should recite the following prayers:

- i Morning: All the five prayers used in preparing *Amrit*: baptism
  - (1) *Japji*
  - (2) *Jap*
  - (3) *Sudha Swaiyas*
  - (4) *Chanpai* of Guru Gobind Singh
  - (5) *Anand*

ii Evening after sunset: *Rehras*

iii At night just before going to bed: *Kirtan Sohila*

7. From this day your divine Father is Guru Gobind Singh and your divine Mother is Mata Sahib Devi.

8. You should wear the Five emblems of the Khalsa Holy Order called *kakar* in Punjabi, *Ks* in English, and *Kafs* in Persian because they begin with the letter "K": (N.B. They are discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6, 7).

- i *Keshas*: hair with turban on.
  - ii *Kangha*: Comb
  - iii *Kirpan*: sword 6-9 inches (least miniature length 2½ inches).
  - iv *Kara*: bracelet.
  - v *Kach*: (underwear coming to a little above knees).
9. i Let not your hands ever indulge in theft, plunder and exploitation of the poor or gambling.
- ii Let not your ears hear calumny or evil of others.
- iii Let not your eyes covet other people's wealth and wives.

10. You should not take any intoxicant like wine, hemp or toddy, etc.

11. You should not believe or practise any of the Tantric cult practices like yantra, mantra, nor ever have faith in any astrological superstitions, omens and auspicious days and moments. Every moment when you can remember God and seek His aid is appropriate and auspicious to start any work you want to do.

12. You should not in any way and in any form accept Brahmanical teachings about castes and classes, fasts and pilgrimages, etc.

13. You should avoid religious and cultural relations with the followers of the following false prophets:

- i *Followers of Minas* (Elder Brother of Guru Arjan who set up parallel Guruship and also a separate Granth of his own. They are almost extinct. Their followers have now accepted the Khalsa ideals and given up their faith in Mina gurus.
- ii *Dhirmal's Followers*: Dhir Mal was elder brother of the seventh Guru. He set up his impostor *gaddi*, but his successors in the time of the Misals accepted the Baptism of Double-Edged-Sword and they have virtually merged in the Khalsa Panth.
- iii *Ram Rai's Followers*: Ram Rai tried to set up a parallel guruship after the seventh guru but failed. He set up a *dera* at Dehradun. Ram Rai was burnt alive by his own followers while he was in trance of a *Samadhi*. His four wives were saved from a similar tragic fate by Guru Gobind Singh. Ram Rai's school of thought believed in Gurbani but was inclined more towards Tantric practices of the Rightist type.
- iv *Followers of Masands*: As *masands* or official priests had started baptizing independently their followers drifted away from Sikhism. The *Masands*

were very active in the early part of the eighteenth century, some of them helped the Afghans and Mughals against the Sikhs. So they were socially and culturally boycotted.

*Comments:* These false prophets of old are virtually extinct or inactive as a force against Sikhism.

14. The following are the four acts of apostasy. Whoever commits even one of these is an apostate from Sikhism, a *patit*: one who has fallen away, or broken off from Sikhism:

(i) One who cuts his hair or even trims it is an apostate from Sikhism. (For comments and interpretation of the prime importance of hair in the spiritual discipline of Sikhism, please see chapter 5).

(ii) **Adultery** is an act of apostasy; Sikhs are generally told that you should not associate yourself with a *Musli*, *Turkani* or *dummi*; These were popular words for prostitutes or characterless women. There were never any prostitutes among the Sikhs. Most of the prostitutes came from the Muslim community in N.W. India. Adultery covers illegal association with other women. Guru Gobind Singh strictly forbade his disciples from doing the least harm to the women of the enemy camp. Mughals and Afghans generally molested all captured women and carried them away as booty to be sold or kept as slaves. Ahmed Shah's poet historian who was fighting the Sikhs in one of the battles, writes: "Truly they are lions in battle and at the time of peace they surpass Hatim (known for his extreme generosity). When they fight with spear, they bring defeat to the army of the enemy. When they hold the spearhead upward they break to pieces even the Caucasus mountain. When they bend a bow they set to it the foe killing arrow. When they pull it up to the ear, the body of the enemy trembles like a cane. If their hatchet strikes a coat of mail, then the coat of mail itself on the body of the enemy becomes a shroud. If Brahm Ghor (who fought tigers) came before them he also would admit their superiority."

"Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do

not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be queen or slave. Adultery also does not exist among them. None of them is a thief. A woman whether young or old is called a *buriya* (mature lady). The Sikhs never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them, and they do not keep company with adulterer and thief."<sup>17</sup>

(iii) He who smokes or uses tobacco in any form commits an act of apostasy. *Why is Smoking an Act of Apostasy in Sikhism?* The history of tobacco and smoking would indicate the real reason why the use of tobacco and smoking was tabooed to such an extent that it was made an act of apostasy. A question is often asked as to why smoking is an act of apostasy while drinking wine is comparatively a lesser offence, though a considerable offence.

Wine as an intoxicant is in principle prohibited by all religions, and no one can drink wine in any House of God, and no one addicted to wine is considered a good or reliable man in Sikh society.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, wine, though prohibited along with drugs and intoxicants, was used as a medicine for a number of purposes in Indian homes, and had pervaded so much that it was difficult to eradicate it, or prevent its use totally.

Tobacco was an evil which had entered India just after the Compilation of our Holy Book, the *Adi Granth*. There are many prohibitory injunctions against wine in the scriptures, but we find none against smoking, for this very reason. This might have given the impression that smoking was not prohibited by the Sikh scriptures. But now a days smoking in the west has become more popular than wine, and the average man finds it difficult to believe that it was unknown three or four hundred years ago.

Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) received its first name from Tobacco, a province in Yucatan, New Spain, some say from the island of Tobago, one of the Caribbees, others say from Tobasco in the gulf of Florida. It was first observed at St Dominga, in Cuba, 1492 and used freely by Spaniards in Yucatan in 1520. It was first brought to England by Sir John Hawkins in 1565. It was manufactured only for export. It was

first brought to Europe by Francisco Fernandes, a physician of Pbillip II of Spain. Ralph Lane, the first governor of Virginia and Sir Francis Drake brought with them in 1586 from the first American possessions of the Crown, the implements and material of tobacco smoking which they handed to Sir Walter Raleigh, "who became so addicted to smoking that he took a pipe of tobacco even before he went to the scaffold. The Pied Bull Inn at Islington is the first House in England where tobacco was smoked. In 1584 a proclamation was issued against it. James I in his booklet, *"A Counterblast to Tobacco,"* attacked Sir Walter Raleigh for making fashionable in his kingdom so vile and stinking a custom as smoking! He wrote, "Have you not reason then to be ashamed and to forbear this filthy novelty so basely grounded, so foolishly received, and so grossly mistaken in the right to use thereof? In your abuse thereof, sinning against God, harming yourself both in person and goods, and taking also thereby the marks and notes of vanity upon you: by custom thereof, making yourself to be wondered at by all foreign civil nation, and by all strangers that come among you, to be scorned and condemned. A custom loathsom to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of pit that is bottomless."<sup>19</sup>

The cultivation of tobacco was prohibited in England by Charles II, in 1684, that is during the life-time of Guru Gobind Singh and fifteen years before the Khalsa Holy Order was established. Permission to grow tobacco in England with conditions was granted by Board of Trade, April 1886. Indulgence in tobacco spread with great rapidity throughout all nations and that in the face of the most resolute opposition of statesmen and priests, the counterblast of a great monarch, penal enactments of excommunication and even capital punishment.

Tobacco was introduced into India during the reign of Jahangir and after the compilation of *Adi Granth*. All the three Mughal Emperors, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb made prohibitory laws against it and strictly prohibited its use in the Court, but first secretly and then openly smoking became com-

mon. Guru Gobind Singh wisely made it an act of apostasy and to this day Sikhs as a community are never found smoking. A Sikh-like person who is found taking drugs or smoking has absolutely no place in Sikh society. He is not considered Sikh in any sense of the term. It goes to the credit of this community that where the laws of Western and Eastern Rulers have failed to curb or control it, the Commandment of Guru Gobind Singh has been obeyed more scrupulously than any Commandment of Moses by Christians and Jews.

Dr. David Owen, Minister of State said in his speech in the Parliament in January 1976, "Nineteen million people in this country smoke cigarettes; nearly half the adult population and it is estimated that cigarette smoking is responsible for at least 50,000 pre-mature deaths, annually and great deal of consequential ill health and suffering. This is because Christian Religion and Christian Churebes instead of doing something to prevent it, have patronized it. It is a shameful spectacle that many priests after delivering pious sermons abandon themselves to smoking." If ever a successful movement emerged to curb the control of smoking, and use of drugs, it will be from the Churehes, Temples, Mosques and Synagogues, and not from the offices of the Ministers.

(iv) He who eats meat cut according to Muslim rites commits an act of apostasy. In Sikhism the question of eating meat or being a vegetarian is paradoxical. But it is quite clear on some major points. What puzzles many people is that if meat is permitted, why is meat cut according to Muslim religious rites an act of apostasy. The main reason for this is, that Muslim *halal* (meat cut according to Muslim rites) was used throughout Muslim Rule in India as a means of conversion. For the same reason the Hindus, and Jews, the Sikhs and lay Buddhists do not eat the Muslim meat. In Mughal India no one was permitted to slaughter animals for food, in any other manner except that prescribed by the Koran and Islamic law. Guru Gobind Singh made it an act of apostasy and commanded his disciples not to submit to such Islamic laws in the Islamic state of Aurangzeb.

Another thing which puzzles many people is that many



Sikh heroes of history and almost all saints of the recent past have been strict vegetarians and have advocated avoidance of meat. The correct position on eating meat is general permissibility, emphasizing tremendous deal of restraint on eating meat. The following points are the chief guidelines:

(1) Almost every food can be offered as a devotee's offering in the Sikh temple, but meat cannot be offered in any form and under any circumstances.

(2) Meat can never be cooked in the precincts of the Sikh temple or used in the common kitchen as sacramental offering of the *langar*. It is strictly prohibited in the *langar* (free kitchen attached to the temple).

(3) Saints and seers have for the sake of higher meditations and intenser spiritual practices given up meat.

(4) It is wrong to associate physical prowess with the use of meat, because history records that Baba Banda and Baba Dip Singh did not take meat. The members of *Nihang Jatha* of Baba Dip Singh still do not take meat.

(5) We have two letters of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, the first to wear two Swords, restraining his followers from eating meat. Probably the habit of eating meat had increased considerably.

(6) While there are verses restraining from meat even in the *Adi Granth*, it is made clear in the Sacred Writings that vegetarianism alone is not the gateway to liberation. It is helpful as a means perhaps. So those who take meat (as most of the Sikh leaders do these days) are as good Sikhs, as the vegetarian Sikhs. People will be ultimately judged by the devotion to God and their character, and not by their vegetarian or meat eating dietary habits.

Forbidden food for the Sikhs is that which is unlawfully acquired, such as food bought by money that has been acquired by theft, exploitation of the poor, or misappropriation of what belongs to others. Wealth acquired by illegal means or by exploiting the labours of others is forbidden possession. Sikhs should shun it as Hindus shun beef and Muslims shun pork. For a Sikh, taking food out of such earning would be like eat-

ing human flesh (*murdar khae*). "Eat only that what you earn by the sweat of thy brow" (Nanak: *Gujari* 1 : 4). "By putting spices in forbidden food it will not become lawful. Those whose Guru is blind eat what is morally unlawful for them to eat." (Nanak: *Majh ki Var* 7,2) "Fools quarrel about eating or not eating meat." (Guru Nanak: *Rag Malar*).

Duncan Greenless sums up the correct position in his "*Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib*:" when he says, "All He gives us for our earthly needs is pure. The Guru does not advocate that all should necessarily eat flesh, but warns us against the superstitious belief that by mere abstention we can become pure, that spirituality is based on diet, that what goes into man can defile him; and in brief that *moksha* depends upon the contents of the stomach. So we have absurd arguments about whether fish and egg are vegetables; whether eating eggs violates the law of *ahimsa*, whether eggs are sensitive to pain, and the like, wasting life's precious moments in childishness instead of learning how to love and worship God. Experience proves that it is possible for the foulest eater to tread the highest path of spirituality, while the most punctilious abstainer from flesh is not infrequently a very sink of materialism and lust."<sup>20</sup> Guru Nanak has rightly stressed that foolish are the people who ignore intense inward devotion to God and debate and quarrel about eating meat, and the guidelines he gives are most appropriate.

*Listen O seers, if you eat,  
That which causes ailment in your body,  
Or that which disturbs your mind with evil thoughts,  
It will lead to unhappiness.*

Guru Nanak, *Sri Rag*, p.60

## VI

### Rehat and Rehatnamas

#### The Sikh Code of Conduct and Historical Documents

(1) **The Meaning of Rehat.** The word *Rehat* occurs in *Adi Granth* a number of times and everywhere it means precepts

for moral and spiritual life. It is the moral and spiritual discipline necessary for a Sikh to achieve what Sikhism aspires to achieve. When Guru Gobind Singh baptized the first five Sikhs, and subsequently more; he gave them ethical and spiritual instructions, covering the family life, social life, and life in all other spheres vital for pious living. He later asked some of his prominent disciples not only to record what the Khalsa should do, but also what he should not do. These documents of Contemporary Sikhs, and later on of others about the same subject came to be known as *Rehatnamas*. *Namah* means, a writing, an epistle, a history, model, type, a mirror, a looking glass. Even the Gospels in Persian are known as *Nama-i- Chaharm* (Four Gospels). *Rehatnama* therefore means that it is an authentic document about the Sikh Code of Conduct covering all aspects of their life.

We have sufficient evidence in Guru Gobind Singh's own writings explaining what Khalsa morally and spiritually is. We will first give the views of Guru Gobind Singh and then the *Rehatnama* of Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Desa Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh, and Bhai Nand Lal. Complete translation of these *Rehatnamas* is given. Prahlad Singh's *Rehatnama* is a much later work and is full of curses. It is highly misleading on many points. In the opening and closing verses of this *Rehatnama* the real author Daryai Udasi reveals his identity by saying "*Gurmukh Singh agya moha dini rehatnama tum likho navinin*: Gurmukh Singh commanded me to write a new *Rehatnama*; The writer gives his identity saying: "*Bhai Daryai Udasi ke parthae hoye*"; "It was written by Daryai Udasi." There are some verses taken from *Sarb loh Granth*, and some from Bhai Nand Lal's *Rehatnama*: It however lays stress on the five Ks.

(II) **Guru Gobind Singh's definition of the Khalsa.** The 33 Swaiyas of Guru Gobind Singh found in *Dasm Granth* are actually a *Rehatnama* of the Khalsa giving the ideals of the Khalsa, and vividly sketching his character. Unfortunately, like many other compositions of the Guru in the *Dasm Granth*, it is incomplete. Some of the verses have later on been included in *Sarb-loh Granth*. The first verse of this composition gives the character and ideal of the Khalsa.

### **The Khalsa**

*Awake to the Light (Jyoti)  
Meditating day and night  
The Name of the Lord,  
Having no faith in any except the one Lord.  
Absorbed in His splendour,  
Absorbed in His Love,  
Even in error  
Never believing  
In fasts and tombs,  
Nor cloisters of idolatory;  
Caring not even for  
Bathing in holy places,  
Nor for penances of yogis  
Nor for asceticism of sannyasis:  
Know such a Child of Light,  
Such a paragon,  
Such a Complete Man,  
In whose heart ever shines,  
The perfect Light of God,  
To be the Khalsa.*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Dasm Granth*

Thus Guru Gobind Singh the Creator of the Khalsa gives the following traits of the personality and spiritual state of the Khalsa in this verse and subsequent verses of 33 Swaiyas.

- (1) He has no faith in any except One God.
- (2) He inwardly meditates day and night on the Name of God.
- (3) Through meditation he is spiritually exalted and in his heart the Light of God ever shines.
- (4) He is ever awake to Eternal Light, which means he ever lives in the inwardly visible Presence of God. As such he is a Child of Light.
- (5) His religion is the path of love. His contemplation is to be absorbed in His splendour.
- (6) The Khalsa does not believe in the Muslim practice of worshipping the tomb or graves of the saints.

(III) **Rehatnama of Bhai Daya Singh.** Bhai Daya Singh was the first to offer his head as a sacrifice, when he received Guru Gobind Singh's call, a sacrifice for which he received from the Master the highest illumination and the highest status as the Beloved Knight of the Khalsa Holy Order. His *Rehatnama* which was obviously written after the death of Guru Gobind Singh elucidates the basic ideals of the Khalsa and urges a complete break with Brahmanical Faith and Muslim Cults which were so popular at that time. I have not found any document with a date. His *Rehatnama* states:

- (1) A Sikh of the Guru should not in the least have any faith in *maths* Brahmanical monastries), idols, pilgrimage to holy rivers, gods and goddesses, fasts, Brahmanical ceremonies of image worship (*puja* and *archa*), nor should he believe in Tantric mantras and Yantras, nor go to Brahmins and pirs for amulets, talisman or seeking omens, nor submit to the Hindu sacrament of *Gaytri* and *Tarpana*.
- (2) He is the Khalsa who has dedicated his body, mind and wealth to the Supreme Being.
- (3) A Sikh should not wear any sacred thread of the Hindus. He should not perform any Hindu rites and ceremonies on birth, death, nor the ceremony of feeding Brahmins for the salvation of ancestors. He should not perform marriage according to Vedic rites. He should perform all ceremonies according to discipline (*maryada*) of the Gurus by offering prayers (*ardasa*) before the Lord.
- (4) A Sikh should render whatever help he can to others.
- (5) He should visit the temple of the Guru and on the way to the temple walk with restraint and reverence.
- (6) If no one offers his daughter in marriage to a Sikh young-man (because he is poor) he should offer his daughter willingly.
- (7) To kill infant daughters or to give one's daughter to a clean-shaven man out of greed is a serious religious offence.

- (7) He does not believe in idolatory and image worship.
- (8) He does not go to Hindu places of pilgrimages for salvation or *mukti*.
- (9) He does not practise Yoga *asanas* and other feats of penance associated with Yoga of any sort.
- (10) He does not indulge in any ascetic practice of sanyasins (Hindu monks). Other verses of this very composition give the following moral and spiritual directions which are also found in other *Rehannamas*:
- (11) God is all pervading and He can be realized only in the poised *samadhi* of the Essence of Truth. (*Tat-Samadhi*).
- (12) Vedas and Koran have not known His limits. *Siddhas* and *Yogis* have not seen His Light in their *samadhis*. Contemplate His Name to realise Him (4-10).
- (13) Love the Creator in your heart. Never vainly try to find Him in *Avatar-worship* (worshiping prophets as God), just as Hindus worship Rama and Krishna. God is not to be found in the narrow confines of temples and mosques. No prophet however great is God Himself. (14)
- (14) Do not turn your back on the One and Only God and do not worship many gods and goddesses. (*ek ko chad anek bhajan*).
- (15) Do not have any faith in **Brahmanical**, **Vaishnava** or **Shaiva** Deities. (16)
- (16) Pay no attention to Yogis who smear their bodies, keep matted hair, or put on any other garb or robes. For greed, lust, cheap popularity they wander from door to door. Their hearts are empty, and their *samadhis* are sham. The true Religion is the Religion of divine Love.
- (17) Follow not hypocritical saints who are actually *thugs* in holy garb. (19)
- (18) Worship not any idols (20). There is no God in stone images. (20)
- (19) Penance carried on for years yields no result without true devotion to God.
- (20) Follow not the *masands* (disbanded Sikh missionaries) who have become pitiless exploiters. They are hypocrites, selfish, greedy, and make innocent people worship them.

- (8) When a Sikh offers his daughter to a devout Sikh it is like nectar mingling with nectar.
- (9) When a Sikh (Khalsa) gives his daughter to a clean shaven person it is like putting nectar into the mouth of a snake.
- (10) A Sikh should shampoo his hair every fourth day.
- (11) A Sikh should use white, yellow, blue or grey colours for turbans or clothes. There is no hard and fast rule about colours. There is no strict injunction against any colour. Yellow, blue, and white or grey have found great favour in Sikh traditions).
- (12) A Sikh should consider all other Sikhs, rich or poor as his brothers in faith.
- (13) He who has treachery and disloyalty in his heart is doomed to perdition.
- (14) To accept the offerings from the *Pir* or the Muslim Saint *Sakhi Sarwar* is a religious offence. (*Sakhi Sarwar* was a Muslim Saint whose real name was Sayyid Ahmed).
- (15) He who puts on sacred marks of the Hindus on his forehead, or wears rosary of wooden beads of *Vairagi* sects, commits a breach of discipline.
- (16) Whenever any communal or national decision is to be taken, five outstanding Sikhs should take decision on what is right or wrong according to *Rehat-nibek* (principle of moral discrimination and enlightened wisdom) and the *Gurmata* (collective decision) should be the final decision which everyone should accept. (This principle of *Gurmata* strikes at the root of all dictatorship, or one man Rule in Sikh society and polity. T.S.).
- (17) The drawers (*kach*) should be upto the knees and not lower than the knees.
- (18) The kitchen should be plastered with clay and not with cow-dung according to Brahmanical rites.
- (19) A Sikh should discard all Hindu Muslim prejudices, nor should he accept the religious domination of any of them.

- (20) *Ekadashi* fasts of the Hindus should not be kept by the Sikhs.
- (21) Sikhs should perform marriage rites according to the Anand marriage rites of the Sikhs and not according to Vedic rites.
- (22) A Sikh should always remain in military preparedness and keep his horse and weapons with care and concern.
- (23) He who employs the Brahmins to perform marriage and death ceremony according to Hindu rites, commits breach of discipline and should be given penitentiary punishment.

(IV) **Rehatnama of Bhai Desa Singh.** After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the most outstanding leader, theologian and scholar who led the Sikh Community with the help of the Holy Mother and other Apostles was Bhai Mani Singh. Bhai Desa Singh was son of Bhai Mani Singh. This was a unique family in Sikh history. Bhai Mani Singh's grandfather, Bhai Ballu was the first to die in the first battle of Guru Hargobind. He was seion of a royal Rajput family. Mani Singh's elder brother Bhai Dayal Das fell a martyr along with Guru Tegh Bahadur. All his other nine brothers, and all his sons, including Bhai Desa Singh fell martyrs to the cruelty and tyranny of the Mughal rulers. Bhai Mani Singh was himself treacherously arrested by Lakhpat Rai, the Hindu Diwan of Zakariya Khan, and his body was cut limb by limb from every joint, according to the Islamic law of the times. This *Rehatnama* is of a great contemporary.

- (1) The primary Rule of the Sikh Path is that one should get baptized according to the Baptism of the Two-Edged Sword (*Khanda-ki-Pahul*).
- (2) A person should get baptized by five Sikhs who are found competent to baptize, and whatever *Rehat* (Code of Conduct) they enunciate, it should be strictly followed.
- (3) One should keep away from those who kill their infant daughters. One should devote himself to the reading and understanding of Sikh scriptures and discard back-biting and calumny.



- (4) Let a Sikh continuously utter *Vah-Guru*. Let him keep the Name *Vah-Guru* ever in his heart. One should greet others saying "*Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa, Vah-Guru ji ki Fateh*": The Khalsa is of the Almighty Lord; Victory ever is of God.
- (5) A Sikh should bring home earning which is earned by the sweat of his brow (lit: by the ten nails of his hands). He should give tithes for the humanitarian cause of the Guru.
- (6) He is a disciplined Sikh (*Rehatwan* Sikh) of the Guru who considers other people's daughters to be his own daughters, and considers other people's wives to be his sisters or mothers (if elderly), and is attached to his own wife.
- (7) A Sikh should never renounce the ethical principles of moral enlightenment according to the established code of conduct (*Rehatbibek*). In the battle-field he should fight face to face and never run away from the battle-field. The Khalsa is the image of the Guru, serving whom supreme happiness is attained.
- (8) Let a Sikh take up farming, trade and work of artisan or any other job that suits his taste. Let him take up a profession in which he has acquired proficiency and with determination and efficiency do his work. He should never indulge in theft or exploitation of another's labours.
- (9) Prostitutes, street walkers, characterless women who loiter about in lust hunger should be discreetly avoided. A Sikh should not bestow his affection on any undesirable woman. If he does so he will suffer. So a man of divine knowledge should keep away from them.
- (10) A Sikh should completely discard:
  - i. *huka*: (hooka) a tobacco pipe in which smoke is drawn through water and a long tube.
  - ii. *kutha*: meat cut according to Muslim rites.
  - iii. *charas*: exudation of the flowers of hemp collected with the dew and prepared for use as intoxicating drug.

iv. *tambacoo*: tobacco.

v. *ganja*: hemp plant (*cannabis sativa*); the leaves and young buds of the hemp plant. The fructification when nearly ripe is bruised and smoked in order to produce intoxication; the dried leaves are ground and mixed with water and drunk for the same purpose; in this later stage it is called *bhung*.

vi. *topi*: cap of any type, or hat or helmet.

He who never touches these is a disciplined Sikh.

- (11) Let a Sikh never go about without weapons and be ever ready in defence preparedness.
- (12) Let not a Sikh ever eat the sacramental food or anything already partly eaten by sannyasins, Vairagis, Udasis, Yogis, Jangams or Tantric yogis. (Most of these Hindu mendicants used to order large quantity of food and take some out of it and eat it and give the remains of their plate called *juth* to disciples. The Sikhs were prohibited from eating such leavings (*juth*) of any holy men.
- (13) Let a Sikh learn from another Sikh the Gurmukhi letters, i.e. reading and writing the Punjabi language and script (which is the language and script of major Sikh scriptures). If he can learn any other language or learn any enlightening system of knowledge from another person he should do it.
- (14) A Sikh should memorize hymns from both *Adi Granth* and *Dasm Granth*.
- (15) On auspicious days like the day of birth and death of Guru Nanak a Sikh should prepare some sacramental food (*karah prashad*) and *langar* and feed other people.
- (16) A Sikh who is rich and wealthy should look to the needs of those who are poor and destitute. If he sees a person from foreign country or lands he should willingly extend his hospitality towards him.
- (17) A Sikh should be courteous and sweet of speech and give opportunities of employment to his brother Sikhs. All Sikhs should live in fellowship and love, and remove all

ill-feelings from amongst them.

- (18) A Sikh should shun these five evils:  
(i) adultery (ii) gambling (iii) lies or falsehood (iv) theft  
(v) wine.
- (19) Once entrenched in a battlefield, a Sikh should never run away, and like a true Sikh he should fight unto death.
- (20) He should never give up humility and courteous behaviour. He should discreetly avoid mischievous people.
- (21) Let a Sikh reduce day by day the passions of lust, wrath, greed, pride and vanity. He should never tell a lie but should discipline himself in humility righteousness, and ethical wisdom (*viveka*).
- (22) A Sikh should consider wealth, material happiness, political power, children, wife, knowledge to be gifts of God and the Guru, and should not be proud of them.
- (23) A Sikh should never speak disparagingly of other religious paths or creeds of the world.
- (24) A Sikh should never act as a false witness nor should he take bribe and fail in doing justice.
- (25) Food should be taken in a clean place and with clean hands. None should take his meals without sharing it with others near him.
- (26) A disciplined Sikh (*rehatwan*) should take his meals from his own earnings and also run his household out of his earnings and never under any circumstances use money from temple offerings or charitable funds. This is the greatest sin.
- (27) If a Sikh is posted as a priest of a temple and permitted to use temple offerings for his livelihood, he should take only the amount absolutely necessary for his needs. All surplus money should be used for charitable purposes.
- (28) A Sikh should dissociate himself from apostates who have committed acts of apostasy. He should live in the peace and joy of his righteous disciplined living.
- (29) He who lives according to the Guru's Code of conduct (*Rehatwan*) shall ever abide in the divine Presence of the Guru, in this life and after death.

- (30) Guru Gobind Singh has said: "He alone is my Sikh:  
Who lives according to moral and spiritual discipline  
(*Rehat*)

Know him to be my Master

I am the humble disciple of such a Sikh.

He who lives not according to the Rules of moral and  
spiritual Path,

Has no right to call himself a Sikh.

Such a man suffers blows at His Door.

He who lives not according to the discipline of the Path,  
Can never attain any happiness."

So everyone should live according to the discipline of the  
path;

And thoroughly imbibe the spirit of the Moral Rules.

- (v) **Rehatnama of Bhai Chaupa Singh.** Bhai Chaupa Singh  
was an attendant on Guru Gobind Singh from the boy-  
hood of the Guru. His *Rehatnama* is originally said to  
have been a bigger composition in which he substantiated  
every clause of the *Rehatnama* with quotations from Sikh  
scriptures. Pundit Tara Singh Nitram writes that he  
saw it. I have not as yet been able to locate a copy of  
it: The *Rehatnama* that is available in printed form (sixty  
years old copies) is as follows:

- (1) A Sikh of the Guru should never drink wine. By drink-  
ing wine man loses mental balance.
- (2) A Sikh of the Guru should never have social relations  
with those who kill infant daughters.
- (3) A Sikh of the Guru should not use money belonging to  
his daughter nor take money for giving her in marriage.

**Note:** This *Rehatnama* of Bhai Desa Singh is in poetry  
The *Rehatnama* of Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Chaupa  
Singh are in prose. The *Rehatnama* of Bhai Nand Lal  
is also in poetry. Sometimes the verses of *Rehatnamas*  
which are in poetry contain two to three moral instruc-  
tions in each verse, which are not related to each other.  
In the free prose translation they have been given  
separately. The translation of the Prose *Rehatnamas*  
follows the original in numbering.

- (4) Inter-marriages of the Sikhs should be with the Sikhs.
- (5) A Sikh should not wear any sacred thread of the Brahmins or put on the frontal marks of the Hindu sects.
- (6) A Sikh should consider the mouth of the poor to be the treasury of the Guru. (It means that any money spent on the poor and destitute is as good as giving it as offering to the Guru in the temple).
- (7) A Sikh should not perform any Hindu ceremony after the death of his parents (like *Bhulan*: shaving the hair, etc.).
- (8) When any member of the family dies, a Sikh should offer sacramental food to the Congregation and sing the Hymns of Guru Granth.
- (9) Out of the savings of his honest earnings, a Sikh should give tithes for charitable purposes.
- (10) A Sikh should not become a *masand*, or *pir*, or the keeper of temple.
- ((11) A Sikh should employ a Sikh as his cook.
- (12) Cow-dung should not be used to plaster the kitchen (because it is a Hindu superstition).
- (13) A Sikh should not indulge in such evils as theft, and promiscuity.
- (14) He should not gamble.
- (15) While distributing food in the congregation he should keep silent, and keep his hands clean.
- (16) Before doing any work he should invoke the grace of God by offering prayer (*ardasa*). He should not accept anyone as his Preceptor besides the ten Gurus. He should bring his relatives closer to Sikhism.
- (17) He should consider the Hymns of the Gurus as his fundamental scriptures.
- (18) He should greet a Sikh on meeting him courteously with the Khalsa greeting of *Vah-Guru-ji-ki-Fateh*. He should help a Sikh in all kinds of difficulties.
- (19) A Sikh of the Guru should never pay homage to tombs, graves, Qazis, Brahmins, Mullas, or tombs of *Satis*.

- (20) A Sikh should teach his son how to read and understand *Adi Guru Granth*.
- (21) Every village should have a temple cum rest house where wayfarers can spend their night. The *Adi Guru Granth* should be installed in it.
- (22) A Sikh should remain in defence preparedness and keep necessary weapons with him.
- (23) Know that the Khalsa is distinct in his faith and character from the Hindus and Muslims. He should not have any faith in *Masands*. He should not turn his back on the enemy in the battlefield.
- (24) If a Sikh commits any moral offence or breaks any Rule of the *Rehatnama*, let him stand in the congregation with folded hands, seek forgiveness and accept disciplinary punishment for atonement. (This disciplinary punishment is generally some sort of service from which a man learns humility and equality, like cleaning the shoes of the congregation for a number of days). The Congregation takes a compassionate and forgiving attitude if he sincerely repents.
- (25) A Sikh should not dye his hair and beard. It is a moral offence.
- (26) One who does not accept the greetings of another Sikh commits an offence.
- (27) The religious and cultural matters of the Sikhs should be settled among the Sikhs. It should never be taken to the government. He who does so commits a moral offence.
- (28) To break one's vow, to back out of promise, or to indulge in perjury or treachery are very serious offences.

(vi) **Tankhahnama of Bhai Nand Lal.** Before Bhai Nand Lal met Guru Gobind Singh he was Mir Munshi of Aurangzeb's heir to the throne, Bahadur Shah (Prince Muazzam) and earlier, he was Naib Subedar of Multan. He was a great Persian Poet strongly influenced by Rumi and Hafiz, whom he frequently quotes. When he met Guru Gobind Singh he became his most devoted disciple and the Poet Laureate of his durbar.

We have already quoted Nand Lal's *Rehatnama* of the Sikhs which was in under force when Sikhs were baptized by *Charan Pahul* (baptism of the Lotus Feet). This *Rehatnama* is called *Tankhah-nama* (Penitentiary Punishments for moral offences. Literary translation is: wages of sin).

- (1) Bhai Nand Lal asked Guru Gobind Singh, "Tell us Master, what are the deeds a Sikh should do and what are the deeds which the Khalsa should not do.
- (2) Listen Nand Lal, the fundamental moral and spiritual deeds of a Sikh should be: (i) Contemplation of His Name (*Nam*) (2) Charity (*Dan*) (iii) Bathing the body with water and the mind with divine Word (*Ishnan*).
- (3) He who attends not the congregation, or while sitting in the congregation lets his mind wander commits a serious moral offence.
- (4) He who indulges in useless talk while services in the Sikh temple are going on commits a moral offence. And he who talks in the congregation about anything other than the Divine Word gains nothing.
- (5) He who bows not in reverence to the Holy Book can never attain God.
- (6) He, who while distributing sacramental food, shows greed, continually suffers mental agony.
- (7) This is the way sacramental offering (*karah prashad*) should be prepared. Clean the utensils and the fire place and take equal quantity of three ingredients. One who prepares it must take his bath, and while preparing it he must continually utter the Name of God. He should use fresh and clean water. After preparing it in this way, it should be placed on a low table (*chauki*) near the altar.
- (8) He who offers allegiance to the Seal of the Usurpers of Freedom (Tyrants) and despots or submits to any Hindu superstition, he shall suffer the cycle of birth and death.
- (9) It is undesirable not to go to the congregation or to distribute sacramental food without living according to the Sikh Code of Conduct.

- (10) He who looks at women coming to the congregation with an evil eye, is doomed. He who abandons himself to anger, accepts money for his daughter in marriage, or cheats pilgrims, his religious worship and prayers are of no avail. He suffers cycle of birth and death.
- (11) Every Sikh should comb his hair twice daily, keep his teeth clean, and tie his turban afresh everytime he takes it off.
- (12) Trust not a person who tells lies, or gives nothing in charity out of his earnings.
- (13) Blasphemous is the life of a Sikh who: (1) does not perform ablution and morning prayers, nor does he perform evening prayers, and sleeps without reciting the Bedtime prayer (2) who backbites, (3) who gives up righteousness. (4) who does not fulfil his promise.
- (14) He who takes meat from Muslims cut according to Muslim rites commits an act of apostasy.
- (15) He who listens to profane songs is doomed.
- (16) He will not receive any honour in the Court of God (1) who starts any work without offering invocation prayer, (2) who never offers anything in charity; (3) who puts on the garb of a mendicant; (4) who commits adultery (5) who does not offer anything to the needy.
- (17) He will suffer endlessly who (1) attends not to services while in the temple; (2) speaks ill of saints and seers (3) Who indulges in calumny, gambling and theft.
- (18) He will suffer in hell who (1) misuses for his own purpose temple offerings, (2) cheats in his dealings.
- (19) He who visits prostitutes, or covets other people's wives is not a Sikh.
- (20) He who goes about naked, or performs any duties naked, who wanders about in the streets bare-headed, or eats his food bareheaded, he commits serious offence against moral discipline.

(21) **The Khalsa: His Character**

*He is the Khalsa who gives up calumny,*



*He is the Khalsa who fights in the forefront  
 He is the Khalsa who destroys the five passions  
 He is the Khalsa who burns his past karma  
 He is the Khalsa who renounces pride,  
 He is the Khalsa who keeps away from undesirable  
 women;  
 He is the Khalsa who covets not other people's wealth.  
 He is the Khalsa who is absorbed in His Name,  
 He is the Khalsa who is devoted to the Word of the  
 Guru;  
 He is the Khalsa who is ever prepared to encounter  
 the sword of the enemy courageously.  
 Knowing people (khalaq) to be creatures of God  
 (khalaq)  
 Let no one cause sorrow and suffering to the people.  
 He who wilfully tyrannizes over the people  
 Will be destroyed by the Wrath of God.  
 He is the Khalsa who helps the poor.  
 He is the Khalsa who destroys oppressors  
 He is the Khalsa who contemplates the Name of God.  
 He is the Khalsa who attacks the wicked people  
 He is the Khalsa who is absorbed in His presence.  
 He is the Khalsa who keeps a war horse,  
 He is the Khalsa who is ever ready for the battle.  
 He is the Khalsa who destroys oppressors.  
 The drums of the glory of God will beat,  
 No one will dare to abuse and insult God.  
 The trees and mountains will ring His Name,  
 The three worlds will sing His glory.*

### **The Sovereignty of the Khalsa** **Raj Kare Ga Khalsa**

*Listen Nand Lal, I declare the Truth:  
 I shall in time establish My Sovereignty;  
 I shall blend four castes into one,  
 I shall inspire people to utter God's Name.  
 We shall ride the horses of freedom.*

*We shall fly the falcon of royal sovereignty  
Seeing which the oppressors shall run away.*

*I shall make one Sikh strong enough  
To fight a hundred thousand.*

*He who fights bravely for righteousness.*

*I will liberate Him.*

*The spears of glorious victory will arise aloft.*

*The royal elephants shall carry fluttering flags.*

*Then thousands of cannons will be fired for freedom.*

*The Khalsa shall be victorious from East to West.*

*The Khalsa shall be free and sovereign, and will rule.*

*No one will dare to resist its mighty power.*

*After suffering from internal conflicts all shall unite.*

*He alone shall be saved who takes refuge in His  
Presence.*

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Sarb-Loh Granth* appears to have been compiled long after the compilation of *Dasm Granth* by Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Binod Singh while *Dasm Granth*, even from literary point of view leaves no doubt that the whole of it is a composition of Guru Gobind Singh, and all from one pen, the same cannot be said about *Sarb Loh Granth*. A number of passages of Guru Gobind Singh which Bhai Mani Singh was not able to acquire are found in it.
2. Edmund Candler: *The Mantle of the East*, p.120-21.
3. J. E. Cirlot: *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p.312.
4. G. A. Gaskell: *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*, p.400.
5. Swedenborg *Apoc Rev*: no 50.
6. Gaskell: *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*, p.804.
7. Brihad: Upanishad V 5.1.
8. Charles Kingsley: *The Water of Life*, p.3.
9. Guru Gobind Singh: *Dasm Granth: Bhagauri ki Var 2*.
10. Guru Gobind Singh: *The Jap*: Eng. Trans: by Trilochan Singh.
11. Bhai Mani Singh: *Sikhan di Bhagat Mal: Supplementary Sakhis No 2 MS Copy*.
12. These prayers must be recited from memory.
13. For details of Baptism ceremony see: Koer Singh: *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*, chapter 9; Kesar Singh Chhiber: *Bansavafinama*: Ch 10; Sarup Das Bhalla: *Mehma Prakash*; Sakhi 22; Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*; Ch 11. These are the earliest works. Sainapati: *Gursobha Granth* also throws considerable light on the Code of Conduct of the Khalsa.

14. Bhai Gurdas Var 6 : 19.
15. Bhai Gurdas Var: "*Vah-Guru mantar hai, jap haumai kholi.*"
16. Five prayers of the morning are the same as those used in Sikh Baptism. Kabio bach benti Chaupai is generally read with Evening prayer. Complete Anand Sahib is the morning prayer. Some people read only the first five pauris both in the daily prayers and for baptism. This is against historical traditions and facts.
17. Nur Mohammed: *Jangnama*, p.160.
18. In Sikh Scriptures and *Rehdatnamas*, there are strict injunctions against drinking wine.
19. Maurice Corina :Trust in Tobacco: p.33.  
Health Educational Council's Reports, 1973, 74, 75.  
Dr David Owen's speech in the British Parliament, Jan 1976.
20. Duncan Greenlees, *Gospel of Gurm Granth Sahib*, p.135.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE HAIR, THE COMB AND THE TURBAN OF THE SIKHS

*Know these five Ks to be emblems of Sikhism,  
Under no condition can one be exempt from them.  
Sword and bracelet, drawer and comb—these four,  
Without hair, the fifth, all other emblems are  
meaningless.*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Sarb Loh Granth*<sup>1</sup> (MS)

*"Hair of the head is a symbol of faith, intuition of  
truth, or the highest qualities of the mind."*

G. A. Gaskell: *Dictionary of All Scriptures.*

In Sikhism, the human body is sacred because in it shines the brilliant light of Wisdom and more so because it is the home of Indwelling Spirit of God. It is not the flesh and bones that are important but what makes this flesh and bones appear to be the living image of God on earth, and that is, the Mind and Spirit of Man. The human body becomes meaningful and a dynamic personality because of the dazzling light of the mind and the Spirit. The two are inseparable from each other. The health of the body depends on the health of the mind and Spirit.

According to Guru Nanak, "What is in the Universe is also to be found in the human body, and he who seeks it will find it." "Such is the divine play of the Creator that He has reflected the whole Cosmos in the human body."<sup>3</sup> In the body we find the wealth of the whole world."<sup>4</sup> "He who is enlightened will search in his body and forget all other misleading paths."<sup>5</sup> This body is the golden fort, in which the Infinite Light of the Word pervades. The body is the temple of God in which the spark of His Presence ever resides."

Guru Nanak represents man in his totality, man projected into existence, being-in-the-spirit and being-in-the-world, man in the midst of multiplicity, yet bearing within himself the sign and yearning for unity with the whole. Guru Nanak thus breaks away and stands apart from the Hindu-Buddhist-Jain tradition, and counsels man against realizing his transcendence apart from society. Not only does he not separate man from humanity, but he recognizes that man cannot achieve his transcendence save through humanity, that he cannot realize his being, save with communion with the divine Being. It is within an enlightened mind and heart that the cosmos is evaluated and Existence and Being are revealed to man in a mysterious communication regarding its transcendence, a communication which man must express in his life and reflect in his actions. It is at the root of the certitude that is responsible for his constant assertion that each man can recognize in every other man the fact of human transcendence:<sup>6</sup>

*The Word leads to concentration,  
Concentration to knowledge,  
This is the riddle of the Guru's Word,  
The eternal Light dwells in the human mind,  
And the human mind is the emanation of that Light,  
And our five senses become the Light's disciples.*

Guru Nanak: Ramkali, p.878

This Light reveals itself in the transcendent State or the Tenth Seat of Consciousness which is located in the head, and the head is complete and perfect as a seat of revelation only with the hair on it. Without the hair the head of a mystic is like a maimed limb, never fully capable of containing the full splendour of divine revelation. Mystics like Eckhart and even Plotinus had a glimpse into this transcendent State, just as a mountaineer sees the peak from the foot of the hill. "Eckhart teaches—at the 'apex' of the mind 'there is a Divine Spark' which is so closely akin to God that it is one with Him, and not merely united with Him."<sup>7</sup>

"Whereas hair on the head, because it grows on the top of the human body, symbolizes spiritual forces, and can be

equated within the symbolism of water, with the upper ocean. body hair is equivalent to lower ocean." In general hair represents energy and are related to the symbolism of levels. That is hair located on the head stands for higher forces. Hair also signify fertility. Origen used to say "The Nazarites do not cut their hair because all that is done by just men prospers and their leaves do not fall(46)." In Hindu symbolism hairs, like the threads of a fabric symbolize the lines of force of the universe. A full head of hair represents *elan vital* and the will to succeed. Hairs then come to symbolize the concept of spiritualized energy. Phaldor, in his *Libro d'oro del Sogno*, comments that they represent the spiritual assets of Man. Abundant beautiful hair, for both man and woman signifies spiritual development. To lose one's hair signifies failure and poverty. Now, the reverse of the loss brought about by forces outside Man's control is, in part, willing sacrifice. For this reason Zimmer points out that all who renounce and defy the principle of procreation and multiplication of life in order to embark upon the path of total asceticism, are bound on principle to cut their hair short. They must stimulate the sterility of the aged and hairless who form the last link in the chain of generation<sup>8</sup>."

Zimmer brings out two historical truths. Apostles who believed in a life-affirming view of life valued and nourished hair on their head, as did the Nazarites. While others who espoused life-denying attitude of life like the ascetics of various faiths consider shaving off their hair first and foremost duty. Sikhism, as we have stated strongly, believes in life-affirming view of life.

## II

### Hair in Semetic Tradition

"Long, heavy hair was considered a sign of vitality. In the case of Samson( he having been dedicated to God) the connection of long hair and bodily strength was based on current views. Absolam's famous hair was considered not only an ornament, but as a token of strength. A bald head was an object of mockery."<sup>9</sup>

"A luxuriant growth of hair on head and chin was regarded by the Hebrews and other Semetic people as an important constituent of manly grace. Solomons "youthful horsemen" in the most delightful flower of their age had long hair on their heads (Joshua Ant viii, vii, 3). It was admired distinction to have bushy curled locks, black as raven. Amongst women long dark tresses were held most captivating and they have always worn long hair. Men dreaded baldness as suggesting a suspicion of leprosy (Lv 13:40). The Babylonians wore their hair long, binding their heads with turban<sup>10</sup>.

"The Nazarites allowed their hair to grow uncut for religious reasons. The High Priest and the priests in general were expressly forbidden to have their heads shaved. The ancient Egyptians had combs and as the Assyrians also were very careful in dressing their hair, it may be due to mere chance that combs are not mentioned in the Old Testament. The Assyrians wore their hair in several braids reaching down to the nape of their neck. As a sign of mourning the head was shaved."

"The Law (in Judaism) regards it in an entirely different light, as it forbids shaving the head on the ground that Israel belongs to Yahweh only (Deut xiv i). Originally shaving in times of mourning indicates that the hair was sacrificed to the dead. The Law also regarded as a heathen custom the shaving of the head in the centre (Jer ix 26, 23, xlix 27) and forbade it as such to Israelites (Lev : xix 27)."

"The ancient conception mentioned above that continually growing hair like the blood, is a sign of vitality, sufficiently explains the sacrifice of the hair. The Rabbinical literature in Judaism reveals that the hair was regarded by the Rabbis as so powerful an augmentation of beauty that married women were recommended to hide it. A man who curled his hair was regarded as a vain man. While Samson was filled with the Holy Spirit, his hair made a noise like the bells and the sound was heard from Zorah to Eshtath. "In enumerating the wonders of creation, God pointed out to Job the wisdom shown even in the making of human hair. A penalty of one hundred salaim is imposed by the Rabbi for pulling an antagonist's hair, because human hair is associated with thoughts. The number of the

hair of the human head is said to be one billion and seven thousand."<sup>11</sup>

Among the Hebrews, Arabs and other peoples, cutting the flesh was often associated with shaving the head in mourning, or taking part of the hair to lay in the tomb, or on the funeral pyre. Among the Arabs and Hindus, women in mourning shave their head. The habit of tearing the hair in mourning still persists among the Jews and Hindus. It was also a sign of mourning to let the hair fall unattended and dishevelled (Ezk 24-17, Jth 10-3).

Possession of a leader's hair in primitive magic was esteemed a potent means of getting and retaining a hold on his person by his followers. The Arabs used to cut off the hair of the prisoners before setting them free.

Wisdom in the Semetic faiths was always associated with grey hair. Hoary grey hair on the head was the crown of glory, the reward of a life of righteousness. For grey hairs to come down on the grave in peace was token of a life of God's favour. Grey hair laid in men obligations of honourable and chivalrous conduct. White hair was an element of glorious appearance. (2 Mac 15-13), especially that of divine majesty (Dt 7-8, Rev 1-14) The hair of Samson was regarded as the seat of strength (JG 16-22). The Jews swore by the hair (Mt 5). One of the most binding oaths in the East now is by the beard<sup>12</sup>

### III

#### **Hair in the Greek Philosophic Tradition**

The Greeks loved rich waving hair. the youthful gods, Bacchus and Appolo were figured with plenteous locks. Enslaved foreigners were forced to shave. It is the Egyptians who loved completely shaving their heads and faces and they ridiculed the long hair of the Asiatics and the Greeks. Women never shaved their heads. Offering the hair to the Deity was common among the Greeks and Hindus. The idea more or less consciously underlying these practices probably was, that by means of his hair, part of himself, instinct with his life, the devotee formed a stable link of connection with the sanctuary



and the deity there worshipped. If an important part of life was conceived as residing in the hair we can see why that of consecrated person was so cared for. Priests not only allowed their hair to grow but kept them untouched.<sup>13</sup>

"The Greeks," says Prof. Becker, "bestowed great pains on the natural ornament of the head, the hair as Plato calls it; and they were very adverse to having it covered up in any manner. Winkelmann remarks that the natives of the South are endowed with greater profusion of hair than the inhabitants of northern lands; and by the Greeks its growth was carefully cherished as it was thought to contribute greatly to render the figure noble and attractive. No less attention was lavished on the beards, which was not looked on as a troublesome incumbrance, but as dignified ornament of maturity and old age. Hence the whiskers, the moustaches and the beard were allowed to grow. None of these parts were shorn; but of course there were variations in the wear, according to race, abode, condition and individual character. Compare for instance the busts of Solon and Lycurgus or those of Plato, Antisthenes and Chrysisippus. Also see the busts of Demosthenes, Diogenes, Epicurus, Epimenidus, Euripides, Epicrates, Aeschines, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes and Zeno." "Pythagoras kept long hair, beard, etc," Eratosthenes says, as Phavorinus quotes him, in the eighth book of his Universal History, that Pythagoras was the first man who ever practised boxing in a scientific manner, in the forty-eight Olympiad having his hair long and being clothed in purple. It is recorded of Servius, the sixth king of Rome that his hair emitted sparks on being combed."<sup>14</sup>

"Monuments as well as the Writers teach us that men wore their hair long, in the Homeric period, also down to the fifth century. We sometimes find depicted hair of such length and thickness that it seems almost incredible that a man's hair could have been so much developed.<sup>15</sup> Epictetus argues strongly in favour of wearing long hair. Flavius Domitianus Augustus persecuted the philosophers and ordered them to go to exile. Some of them, in order to conceal their profession of philosophy shaved their beards, Epictetus would not take off his. And

during these days when one of his companions addressed him: "Come, then, Epictetus shave yourself." Epictetus replied, "If I am a philosopher, I answer I will not shave myself." "But," said the other, "I will take off your head." "If that will do you any good, take it off," replied Epictetus.<sup>16</sup>

"Alexander brought shaving into fashion, but there can be no doubt that it was partially adopted at a much earlier period, though the practice was certainly regarded as contemptible. Chryssippus expressly states that this new custom of shaving was introduced by Alexander. Plutarch asserts that Alexander caused his soldiers to be shaved, from the motives of strategic caution. The innovation was stoutly resisted in many States, and was forbidden by special laws which do not seem to have had much effect."<sup>17</sup>

#### IV

##### **Hair and Shaving in Hindu-Jain-Buddhist Tradition**

Hair has had a positive and negative value in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Tradition. To keep hair is to love vital activities of life, to accept social responsibility, and to live in a society as part of society. But to shave the hair means renouncing society, renouncing the social ethics of life.

(1) *Hair, the Glory of Man's Vital Energy*: According to *Apastambha's Aphorisms*: "He who wishes to be consecrated according to the rites of the Vedas shall wear all his hair in one knot or let him tie the lock on the crown of the head in a knot."<sup>18</sup> The *Satpatha-Brahmana* says, "When he has performed the Consecration ceremony (*Abhishekaniya*), he does not shave his hair. The reason why he does not shave his hair is this: that collected essence of the waters wherewith he is then sprinkled (anointed) is vigour, and it is the hair (of his head) that it reaches first when he is sprinkled; hence were he to shave his hair, he would cause that glory to fall off from him, he would sweep it away; therefore he does not shave his hair."<sup>19</sup> At the time of initiation the Brahmin was instructed to keep matted hair: "The clothing of the twice-born (brahmin) should be linen, or of cotton, or also a deer skin, or a cloth entirely

died with reddish colour. There should also be a girdle of *munga* and he should have matted hair."<sup>20</sup> *Naradiya Dharmashastra* says that Brahmins could not be punished by death sentence even for such heinous crimes as manslaughter. "A Brahmin must not be subject to corporal punishment . . . For him shaving his head, banishing him from the town, and parading him on an ass shall be his punishment."<sup>21</sup> Thus shaving the head was equated with capital punishment for the Brahmin.

Even during the early Buddhist period shaving was a sign of ugliness and contemptible. But Buddhism made shaving essential for renunciation. The Early Parsis also considered shaving a sin and crime. *The Epistles of Manushkihar*, a Parsi Text says, "And concerning handsomeness and ugliness in themselves, which are only through having taken up an opinion and belief, there is a change even through time and place; for any one of the ancients whose head was shaved was as it were ugly, and it was so settled by law and that it was sin worthy of death for them; and then its habits did not direct the customs of the country to shave the head of man."<sup>22</sup> Shaving the hair was also punishment for women: "When a married woman commits adultery, her hair should be shaved, she shall have to lie on a low couch, receive bad food and bad clothing, and the removal of the sweepings shall be assigned to her as her occupation."<sup>23</sup>

(2) *Shaving the Head: A Symbol of Escape from Social, Cultural and Political Responsibilities: The Teviggā Suttana of the Buddhists* says, "Full of hindrances is household life, a path defiled by passion, free as the air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. How difficult is it for the man who dwells at home to live the higher life in all its fulness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection. Let me then cut off my hair and beard, let me clothe myself in the orange coloured robes, and let me go forth from a household life into the homeless state."<sup>24</sup> The Sufi dervishes, the Christian monks, the Hindu ascetics all shave off their head with this sense of escape from the mundane world to live purely in the spiritual world. And the reason as Zimmer points out is "to renounce and defy the prin-

ciple of procreation and multiplication of life in order to embark upon the path of total asceticism," and this principle is inevitably associated with shaving the hair.

## V

### The Hair, the Comb and the Turban of the Sikhs

We have already stated earlier in this chapter that according to Sikh philosophy of a physically complete man, a human being must preserve all the hair on his head and face as an essential part of his body. Just as the skull performs the protective function of the brain, the hair, an inseparable part of the skull, performs the function of the preservation of the *elan-vital* of the human being. The complete Man, the Man who is conceived to be physically, and spiritually the image of God is conceived in Sikh scriptures as a man with hair and turban on his head: (*Sabat-surat dastar sira*). The hair of the head is inseparably connected with the comb and the turban in Sikhism. The continued association of Comb as one of the Ks signifies that the hair should be kept clean and healthy like other vital parts of the body. Matted hair and disbevelled hair is not permitted as it is a sign of lethargy, uncleanness, indifference to responsibility and cynical attitude towards life. Going out bare-headed in the streets is an offence. Not to keep the hair clean by shampooing it regularly is also a moral offence.

In the Classical Indian tradition, we have already shown, there are two ideals: One of the recluse, who shunned society and preferred the life of the cloister or the cave; the other of the *Rishi* or *Kashtryia* who lived in society and accepted all responsibilities and challenges of life and yet was wedded to righteousness and justice.:

*Dand eva hi rajendra,*

*ksatradharma na mundnam*

*Mahabharata Santiparva 23, 46*

Commenting on it Dr. Radhakrishnan writes: "His *svadharma* or law of action require him to engage in battle. Protection of right, by acceptance of battle if necessary, is the social

duty of *Kashatriya* and not renunciation. His duty is to maintain order by force and not become an ascetic by shaving off his hair." "O thou best of men," says the author of *Mahabharata (Udyog Parva)* "there are only two types who can pierce the constellation of the sun and reach the sphere of Brahm. The one is the *sannyasin* who is steeped in Yoga and the other is the warrior who falls in the battle fighting."<sup>25</sup> Guru Gobind Singh combined the holiness of *Rishi* and Christ with the social and political responsibility of the *Kashatriya* and gave to the world the *Khalsa* ideals which come very near Plato's ideal of Philosopher King.

The hair of the Sikh is sacred to him because the Five Beloved Knights (*Panj Pyaras*) of Guru Gobind Singh have anointed them with *Amrit* (Elixir of Life). The hair, the head, the mind and the consciousness (*surtā*) have been made alive and vibrant with a new life. "When He touched my hair and blessed me, how can I bear my hair being shorn. The Sikh is the dedicated. I nestle the fragrance of His touch in my tresses. The inspired personality of this Brotherhood is song-strung, love-strung, strong, gentle, fearless, death despising, even death courting, seeking no rewards for incessant self-sacrifice in the name of the Master, dying like moths round the lamp living like heroes, shining like orbs, intoxicated, sweetly exhilarated every moment of life, elevated above sorry details of things, wishing well to the whole universe of life, and desiring nothing but the lyrical repetition of His Name. The breath of man is to resound with it, his pores to flow with its nectarian bliss. The eyes go half-upwards under the upper lids, the forehead seems to be filled with Nectar. My Brotherhood of the *Khalsa* is scattered in the history of man in rare persons. *All those who call themselves Brothers (Khalsa) but are NOT inwardly, spiritually intentionally, consciously and subconsciously of the Guru, are struck of the Roll.*"<sup>26</sup>

Thus the hair of a Sikh is a symbol of his vow to live for the love of God, a vow to seek immortality through contemplation and action, a vow to dedicate mind body and soul at the altar of Truth, Justice, Freedom, for which the Gurus lived and died. Personal *mukti* (liberation) and life in heaven are

never the aim of an enlightened Sikh. The hair must be neatly tied in a tress knot on the apex of the head, and a comb tucked in it, ready for use at any time, and a turban tied round it. The turban of a Sikh is thus an inseperable part of his personality.

All the Sikh Gurus kept hair and beard, and all the Sikh Gurus and Apostles wore turbans. The oldest painting of Guru Nanak now preserved in Ram Rai's dera at Dehradun, a relic which Ram Rai took with him from his father, Guru Hari Rai, shows Guru Nanak wearing a Pathan type turban, which was worn all over by the Punjabis. This type of turban with little modifications continued to be worn by the first five Gurus. Only it was smaller in size, and put on gracefully in the manner the Sufi saints wore it. From the time of Guru Hargobind, the Rajput style royal turgan and dress was patronized by the Gurus and even by the Mughal rulers. Out of this style the Sikh warriors who carried a coit on their head developed variations which we see in the paintings of the Warriors of this period. During Ranjit Singh period Pathan type again dominated. While Ranjit Singh preferred the Rajput style, the Sardars preferred huge Pathan style turbans. The Sikh princes of Ranjit Singh's durbar developed a distinct style of their own, out of which the modern Sikh turban has emerged.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. nisan-i-sikhi in panj kaf  
hargiz na bashad in panj muaf  
kada, kardo, kach, kangha, bidan  
bila kes hecast, jumla nishan.  
Guru Gobind Singh: *Sarb Loh Granth* (MS)
2. *Adi Granth*: Nanak I Maru p.1104. see also 698
3. *ibid* p.117 and 72
4. *ibid* Rag Suhi 754
5. *ibid* Rag Suhi 762
6. Trilochan Singh: *Guru Nanak's Religion: A Comparative Study of Religions*, p.15
7. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p.155
8. Cirlot, J. E., *Dictionary of Symbols* p.134

9. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1925
10. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*
11. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1925
12. James Hastings: *Dictionary of the Bible*
13.       ibid
14. Dharam Anant Singh: *Plato and the True Enlightener of the Soul*  
156-7
15. Blunner: *The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks*, p.64
16. *Discourses of the Epictetus* Tr G. Long Bk I, Ch II
17. Dharam Anant Singh: *Plato and the True Enlightener of the Soul*,  
p.159
18. *Apustambas Aphorisms*, Tr George Buhler, p.8
19. *The Satpatha Brahmana* (Mahayana School) Tr Julius Eggeling,  
p.120
20. Anugita; Tr Kashinath Trinihak Tilang p.361
21. *Naradiya Dharamasashtra* Tr Julius Jolly, p.183
22. *Epistles of Manuskihar*, p.408
23. *Naradiya Dharamasashtra*, p.83
24. *Tevigga Suttanta*; Tr T. W. Rhys David, P.187
25. Radhakrishnan: *Gita Translation*, p.112
26. Puran Singh: *Spirit Born People*, p.180

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SWORD OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

*Guru Gobind Singh received from Guru Nanak,  
The Sword, the Bowl and Victory Unfailing.*

Guru Gobind Singh<sup>1</sup>

*When all other means fail to curb tyranny,  
It is but lawful to take up the Sword.*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Letter to Aurangzeb*

*The Swordlike Spirit of Guru Gobind Singh:* Guru Nanak was born with a sword in his heart and soul. It was a sword which he used relentlessly against hypocrisy, cruelty and terror. He denounced religious thugs and condemned ruthless kings and ministers as they had never been condemned before. Lamenting and protesting against Babur's mass massacre, he wrote, "Terrible has been the slaughter, loud have been the cries of the sufferers. Did this not awaken pity in Thee Lord? If a strong power attacks another strong power, no one would grieve, none would complain. But when a fierce tiger preys on helpless cattle, Thou, Herdsman, must answer for it."<sup>2</sup>

When Satta and Balwand the Bards of the Guru describe the anointing ceremony of Angad as the successor of Guru Nanak, they say, "Nanak placed the umbrella of sovereignty on the head of Angad. He has also graced the heart of Angad with the mighty Sword (*khada*) of divine Wisdom. While yet living in this world, Guru Nanak became the disciple of Angad on the Path of Truth and Angad was installed the Guru."<sup>3</sup> Thus Guru Nanak passed on his Sword of the Spirit to his successor.

Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru, uses military metaphors throughout his writings, which became a passionate ideal for



Guru Gobind Singh. He used these military metaphors to arm his disciples with the Sword of the Spirit without which no battle can be fought. Guru Arjan writes:

*Humility is my spiked mace,  
To be the dust under everyone's feet,  
Is my Two-Edged Sword.  
None of the Wicked can withstand this weapon;  
The Perfect Guru has taught me this.*

*Adi Granth*; Arjan, Sorath p 628

And with these weapons Guru Arjan became the first martyr of Indian history. He had already started giving military training to his son and successor, Hargobind.

*The Two Swords of Guru Hargobind*: When Guru Hargobind succeeded his father at the age of 11, he put on two swords. One he said was the "Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty" (*Piri*), and the other was the "Sword of Political Sovereignty" (*Miri*). The Sikhs were to uphold both Religious and Political Freedoms, wherever they existed. One was utterly useless without the other. They were not merely to worship God, and leave their political freedoms and destiny to others, and live like slaves under any set up. Nor were they to indulge in any such political thinking and action which was devoid of moral and spiritual values. Religion without political freedom and dignity was abject slavery; and politics without religion was organized barbarism.

*The Sword of Guru Gobind Singh*: We have already stated in Chapter 1 and 4 that for Guru Gobind Singh, the Sword was symbol of God's Power, Justice and Saving Grace, through which He protects the virtuous and punishes the wicked. That is why contrary to the traditions in India, he gave new attributive Names to God. Most of the Attributive Names of God prevalent in India emerged out of the divine personality of dancing Krishna, and the pathetic Rama. The Names which he gave to God centred around Sanskrit words for Sword like, *Khadag*, (*Braj Bhasha*: *Khag*), or *As* or Persian words like *Tegh*. Sometimes all these words *Khag*, *As* and *Tegh* are used in the same hymn:

*Sword (Khag) that smiteth in a flash,  
 That scatters the armies of the wicked,  
 In the great battlefield;  
 Thou symbol of the brave  
 Thine arm is irresistible thy brightness shineth forth,  
 The blaze of Thy splendour dazzling like the sun.  
 Sword (As), Thou art protector of the saints,  
 Thou art the scourge of the wicked;  
 Scatterer of sinners I take refuge in Thee.  
 Jai Teghan: Victory to Thee, Sword: Saviour and  
 Sustainer.*

*Jai Teghan: Victory to Thee: Sword Supreme.*

*Guru Gobind Singh: Bachiter Natak: 1*

Thus Guru Gobind Singh has clearly explained in his own words the meaning of the "Sword" as he uses it. His Sword "scatters the wicked," "has the dazzling splendour of the sun," it is the "protector of the saints," "scourge of the wicked" "refuge of the Seers and Heroes. It is ever Victorious." *Tegh* (Sword) in Sikh theosophy goes hand in hand with *Degh* (lit: Cauldron or Bowl, the symbol of Undiminishing store of food or physical sustenance. *Degh* and *Tegh* as Guru Gobind Singh uses are the keys to all moral victory and peaceful Rule:

*Knowing that I am Thine,  
 Protect me graciously Lord,  
 Single out my enemies, Lord,  
 And destroy them one by one.  
 May there flourish in the world.  
 Degh: the Bowl of undiminishing Food,  
 Tegh: the Sword, the symbol of God's Power and  
 Justice.*

*Guru Gobind Singh: Dasm Granth:*

In his letter to Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh vividly portrays the visible Sword of the tyrant and the Invisible Sword of Almighty God, about which he has written so much:

*Do not mercilessly and ruthlessly use your Sword, on  
 the helpless people, because one day the Unseen  
 Sword will fall on you for your blood.*

*Guru Gobind Singh: Letter to Aurangzeb: Zafarnamah*

When all means fail to curb the oppressive tyranny of a totalitarian despot, it is, says Guru Gobind Singh, righteous to resort to the Sword:

*When all other means fail to curb tyranny,  
It is but lawful to take up the Sword.*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Zafarnamah*

Guru Gobind Singh also writes about the "Sword of Wisdom": *Giane-ki-badhani* which dispels all darkness, and sweeps away all cowardice: in the *Dasm Granth*; Epilogue to *Krishna Avatar*, he gives his own philosophy saying: "Blessed is he in this world, who always has the Name of God on his lips, and in his heart is ever enshrined the spirit of true warriors. Knowing this body to be transient, he sails on the boat of glorifying God and crosses the stormy ocean of existence. He makes his body a mansion of patience, and within it he lights the blazing lamp of divine Wisdom. Holding the Sword of divine Knowledge (*giane-ki-badhani*) in his hands, he sweeps away all cowardice out of his inner life."

Professor Puran Singh correctly writes: "Every Sikh is to wear His Sword. Not his own. *Kirpan* is a gift from the Guru. It is not an instrument of offence or defence; it is mind made intense by the love of the Guru. The Sikh is to have a sword-like mind. It is the visible sign of an intensely sensitive soul. It is but the symbol of the myriad personality of the Guru's Sikh, that knows no defeat, no disappointment, the personality that is unconquerable in its hope, in its spiritual radiance. Guru Gobind Singh says, "I will make one Sikh dominate over a million." This dominion is of the illumined mind. The highly intensified and developed intellect naturally becomes overpowering, so much so that it becomes fascinating and attractive in a physical sense. It gathers its own moths like the intense flame of a night lamp. The presence of a great spiritual man overpowers millions. What is mind if it has not the flash of the lightning and the sword. All conquests in the fields of life are mental and moral; physical conquests are no conquests. I think he who wears the Guru's Sword is a spontaneous man

fully grown in His Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

*The Insignia of the Khalsa Panth (Sikh Community).* We give below the Insignia of the Khalsa called *Khanda* and its interpretation:



#### Interpretation

In the centre is the Two-Edged Sword explained in detail in Chapter 4 as the Creative Power of God which controls the destiny of the whole creation. It is the Sovereign Power over life and death. One edge of the Sword symbolizes divine Justice, which chastises and punishes the wicked oppressors; the other edge symbolizes Freedom and Authority governed by Moral and spiritual Values. On the outside of the Two-Edged Sword we can see two Swords (1) On the left is the Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty (*Pir*) and (2) on the right is the Sword of Political Sovereignty (*miri*). There must always be a balance between the two, and this balance is emphasized by a circle inside. This circle is what is called the *Chakra*. This *chakra* is symbol of all embracing Divine Manifestation, including everything and wanting nothing, without beginning or end, neither first nor last, timeless Absolute. It is the symbol of Oneness, of the Unity of Justice, Humanity and the Immortality. Almost all Sikh warriors used to wear it in the eighteenth century.

It is still worn on the turban by Sikh soldiers of the Sikh Regiments in the Indian Army. The *Chakra* which was worn by the great martyr Baba Dip Singh is still preserved in the *sanctum sanatorium* of the *Akal Takhat*. On it is inscribed the *Mul Mantra* (the Proem of the Sikh Scriptures), and that is what it symbolizes.

It is heartening to see American men and women wearing turbans and experimenting with Sikhism, but it is shocking to see Tantric nonsense being poured down their throat in the name and garb of Sikhism.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Degh O Tegh o Fatch nusrat be-dirang  
Yaft az Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh.  
This translation which I have given is by Sir Muhammed Iqbal, the eminent Persian and Urdu Poet. It is difficult to accept the translation given by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in their books. It is also not correct, as Ganda Singh suggests that Banda was the author of it. We find the doctrine of Degh and Tegh in the *Dasm Granth*. I have given one quotation in this chapter. We find it in the letters of Mata Sahib Devi. The whole of this couplet is found written in Guru Gobind Singh's own hands in a document which the Guru gave to his nephews before he sent them to Nahan, just before the battle of Chamkaur. Guru Gobind Singh is the author of this couplet, as the correct translation indicates.
2. *Adi Granth*: p.360.
3. *Var Satta and Balwand* p.966.
4. *Puran Singh: Spirit Born People* p.137.

## CHAPTER 7

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IRON BRACELET (KARA) AND THE SIKH DRAWER (KACH)

*After wearing the drawer (kach)  
As symbol of continence and tolerance,  
The Khalsa held aloft in his hand the sword.*

Gurdas II

*The iron Bangle (Kara) appears to be the emblem  
of Justice. The fifth symbol is short linen trouser,  
reaching the knees, but not covering them. And this  
is the emblem of Modesty and Temperance.*

Anant: *Plato and the True Enlightener of Soul*  
(Luzac 1912) p. 169

The word *kara* is derived from the Sanskrit word *katak* which means a bracelet of gold, a ring serving for a bridal bit. According to Sukumar Sen's Etymological dictionary, *kara* is described as a ring or wristlet, made of clay or lac still worn in Bengal, by a bride at the time of marriage ceremony. *Kara* thus came to mean, throughout North India, a ring worn on the wrist or on ankles. Two things are clear about it. It is a feminine ornamental symbol of love, devotion, and unbreakable ties. These bangles are worn by women of all faiths, and when a Hindu woman becomes a widow, she either breaks her bangles or puts them off, as a sign of widowhood. Thus the bangle in Indian tradition was a symbol of being protected, and loved by the Beloved who gave them.

We notice that out of the five fundamental instruments of baptism one came as an offering of the Holy Mother and it was sugar. All other symbols represented the manly virtues of life. At the request of the High Priest Ram Koer, the Holy Mother

added her share, and her choice was sugar, the symbol of sweetness, humility and grace. It is quite obvious that, out of the five Ks which the Guru was to give, four were to reflect Man's personality and character, and there was to be one emblem, the fifth one, symbolizing the participation of Holy Mother. This fifth emblem was chosen to be the Iron Bracelet. If women were to carry even such a thing as the sword, and be manly and equal with men in society and the battlefield, men were to carry at least one symbol of the noblest virtue in women, that of loyalty, devotion and unbreakable pledge of love. As the sword was to be of steel, this bracelet was also to be of steel, and both men and women had to wear it. As the sword was to be wielded in the right hand, this bracelet was also to be worn on the right wrist. As sugar was poured into the baptismal Water to sweeten it and make the fiery and blazing sharpness of the Two-Edged Sword savoury and sweetly ambrosial, so also the bracelet was to be worn by the same hand that wielded the sword, to balance the piercing sharpness of the sword with restraint, loyalty, tolerance and compassionate love, symbolized by the bracelet. The bracelet must guide the hand which holds the sword with restraint and sense of justice. In other words the Sword of Guru Gobind Singh can be correctly used only by the hand that wears understandingly the bracelet of Guru Gobind Singh and the Holy Mother.

A Ring or a Bracelet has, all over the world, been used as symbol of moderation, self-control, equanimity and modesty. These are the virtues which balance gallantry, prowess, doughtiness, knightliness and manfulness. Without these restraining virtues of the bracelet, the sword could indulge in rashness, imprudence, and indiscretion. Of all the things in the world the use of the sword requires the noblest virtues of the heart, and these virtues are symbolized by the bracelet, which the Sikhs wear.

A ring or bracelet is generally considered to be the symbol of completeness and protection. St Gregory says, "By a ring is designated the Omnipotence of Divine Power. For, when it keeps us from being siezed by temptations, it encircles around and holds firm in wonderous ways, the snares of the ancient



enemy."<sup>1</sup> At the ordination of the Archbishop in the Roman Catholic Church a ring is given to the bishop. We are told that this ring is a symbol that the bishop is wedded to the Church. The rite underlines the fact that he must be faithful to the responsibilities he is undertaking. "When one sees the iron ring round the right wrist of any Sikh, man or woman, it indicates that he is wedded to the Sikh Church and he carries with him the feeling of loyalty, the sense of belonging to Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh is a Bride of God in the realm of mysticism. He is a Warrior-Knight of God fighting against oppression in the arena of society and civilization. A Sikh is repeatedly told in the Scriptures, *eka Purkh, sabai nar* "the One God is the only Person; all human beings are His Brides." Sirdar Kapur Singh in his scholarly work, "*Parasharprasna: Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, gives the following four meanings of the bracelet:

- (1) The iron bangle symbolizes that "A Sikh must ever remain mindful of his double role of a spiritual aspirant and a useful citizen. No default on one side or the other of the discipline is permissible.
- (2) A circle, a *chakra*, is a perfect figure, all-inclusive in its circumference and without a beginning, without an end in its structure. So must a Sikh aim to be with the whole creation, as the objective of his compassion and activities;
- (3) Since it is, *par excellence*, symbolic of the *Dharma*, the Supreme Law, it is symbolic of faith, without which religious life is inconceivable. A Sikh must lead a life, guided and supported by faith in God;
- (4) Lastly, iron, the world over, is commonly taboo to evil spirits and prevents spells from taking effect. A Sikh remains well protected against the inharmonious influences on his way of life by virtue of holding fast to God and the *Dharma*.<sup>2</sup>

While the first three suggestions of the learned scholar, Sirdar Kapur Singh are profoundly erudite and meaningful, I find it difficult to accept the fourth argument of warding off evil spirits. The whole ethics of Sikh faith as the translation of



*Rehatnamas* reveal, is based on utter disbelief and disregard of the superstition of evil spirits hounding man, and the necessity of any *talisman* for it. It is the superstition of the Romans and the Hindus, which is not accepted even remotely by Sikh history, tradition and theosophy. Taking this line of thought, many people explain away by saying that it is a protection against lightning. Commenting on this suggestion, Prof. Puran Singh says, "I heard a stupid Sikh preacher the other day, who was convincing a mass gathering of the Sikhs that the iron ring of the *Guru* worn on the wrist is a protection against lightning. He said as large buildings are made safe against lightning by a rod of iron, so the *Guru* has saved man from the stroke of lightning. He was hopelessly flinging his arms up and down to gather some straw of a reason to prove the rationale of the iron ring, the *Guru* gave as a gift. Coming to us from our personal God, it comes to us as His gift, and His blessing. Fie on our manners that we argue over and over about it. He loved me, He made me His own. The sword is the mind where the *Guru* lives. The iron ring is the sign of His remembrance. We have to wear the ring which is His gift and we are the prisoners of His infinite love. These are the fetters of love, the price of our freedom. Each Sikh wears hair and the beard of *Guru Gobind Singh*. We are moulded in His image. Those who do not have that personal love for the *Guru* are still out of His Court. But our freedom is in Him and not anywhere without Him. Do not talk to us in that strain of the Sikh preacher. They are the signs of our being 'wedded women'. They are the wedding gifts from the Bridegroom. He gave all these to us, and they are sacred."

## II

### The Drawers: Symbol of Continence and Restraint

In the East, holy men have generally been very indifferent to their body and clothes. They have taken extreme view about restraint of passions, and they have displayed their ascetic temper either by going absolutely naked or by just covering the genitals by a piece of cloth three inches wide and half a yard long called *langoti*. This, in the opinion of *Guru Gobind Singh*, was cynical to the extreme and even unsocial if not anti-social.

The hip dress worn by holymen and the Brahmins was the *dhoti*. Though more elegant than a *langoti*, it was utterly useless for a man who is to wear the sword and take part in active life. It is all right for a Brahmin whose work is to preach and live on alms and charity. Even in the *dhoti* wearing areas, no doctor or engineer or sportsman can afford to wear *dhoti* and do his duties. It has been patronized for clerical jobs.

The *kachh* covers the genitals and the thighs from the hips to the knees. It very much resembles in principle the Khaki shorts (half-pants) popular during the war. A Sikh with his underwear (*Kachh*) can actively go to the battlefield, work on any active secular or religious duty, and perform any service in the temple. The *dhoti* of the Brahmins is associated with innumerable Hindu ceremonies. Strict injunctions to wear the *kachh* and reject *dhoti* is a complete repudiation of those Brahmanical rites and ceremonies:

*After reciting the scriptures,  
And repeating the evening prayers,  
The Brahmin wrangles in polemics,  
Like a crane he sits,  
Before a stone-god  
In sham meditation and worship.  
False is his speech,  
Which can make iron of lies  
To appear to be the gold of truth.  
Thrice he repeats the sacred verses of gayatri  
Around his neck he wears a rosary,  
And puts a frontal mark on his forehead,  
He keeps two dhoties (loin cloths)  
And a piece of cloth to cover his head.*

Guru Nanak: *Asa-di-Var* 14:2

Although *dhoti* is now popular dress in Bengal and made respectable because rich people wear it at home and in the streets, it is still the most essential for Hindu religious ceremonies.

The underwear (drawer: *kachh* of the Sikhs itself suggests

that a Sikh must play the role of a saint and soldier in social and political life. He is a religious man ready to perform all secular duties. Holiness for him is to be expressed in action and restraint, more in smart and sober dress than in cynical other-worldliness. The turban and the drawer represent together what Albert Schweitzer would call a life-affirming view in contrast to life-denying view of a clean-shaven head and *langoti* or *dhoti*. The drawer is therefore a dress for the lower part of the body, which is symbol of smartness, preparedness for action, life-affirming restraint.

To sum up, Guru Gobind Singh's perennial message to his ordained disciples is: *"Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled, who abide by the Guru's teachings, know that I am in their midst. Let him who wishes to see me go to an assembly of Sikhs and approach them with faith and reverence, he will surely see me amongst them (Prein Sumarag). Henceforth, the Guru shall be the Khalsa and the Khalsa the Guru; I have infused my spirit, heart and body, into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa. O Khalsa, remember the true Name; . . . I have attached you to the skirt of the Immortal God and entrusted you to Him — ever remain under His protection and trust none besides Him. O Khalsa, my beloved, let him who desires to see me look into the Guru Granth. Obey the Guru Granth, it is the Guru's visible body; and let him who longs to meet me search diligently in its hymns . . . Read the Guru Granth, or listen to it; so shall your hearts receive consolation in the Guru's Heaven."*<sup>4</sup>

### III

#### Towards Human and Spiritual Unity of Mankind

Even though Guru Gobind Singh created in the Indian setting of Hinduism and Islam what the Sikhs call a third Unique Cultural Nation (*Tisra Nyara Panth*)<sup>5</sup> his main aim was to create a morally and spiritually ideal Man and Society which would be a bridge between irreconcilable faiths like Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. In the *Akal Ustat*, Guru Gobind Singh gives his conception of God and humanity in

which the whole of mankind is seen aspiring to reach the blessed Presence of God:

*The Arabs of Arabia,  
The French of France,  
The Kureshis of Kandhar,  
Meditate on Thee.*

Guru Gobind Singh: *Akal Ustat* :

Naming all people from Manchuria to Rome and England he points out that human beings all over the world worship the same God, and the differences in their forms of worship are mainly due to different cultural environments. Guru Gobind Singh aimed at uniting all mankind in thoughtful, ethical and spiritual righteousness. He says:

*The Hindus and the Muslims are all one,  
Have each the habits of different environments:  
All men have the same eyes, the same body,  
The same form, compounded,  
Of the same four elements:  
Earth, air, fire and water.  
The Abhekh (Fornless) of the Hindus,  
And the Allah of Muslims are the same.  
The Koran and the Puranas praise the same Lord.  
They are all one in Spirit.  
The One Lord made them all.*

*AkalUstat* 86-116

Whether the conflict is between Hindus and Muslims as between India and Pakistan, or between the Muslims and Jews in the Middle East, or between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, or between black and white in South Africa, the problem is the same. The problem cannot be solved in the economic ideological setting by Communist or Capitalist Powers, but by enlightened Religious and Cultural forces which can be a bridge between the warring groups. Neither the Communist nor the Capitalist Powers command much respect in these warring factions. "If we are not to be ruined materially and spiritually we have to seriously consider the problems of equality, social justice, and genuine political freedom not only

for our own community, country and nation, but for all suffering humanity. No section of mankind should become ruinous to any other through superior economic or physical power. Guru Gobind Singh believed that spirituality must transform man from within, before politics transforms him from without. Both must go hand in hand. A number of communities have lived in India for centuries. They have passively tolerated one another just as one tolerates necessary evils. They have never opened healthy dialogue between one another for which Sikhism has always strived. They have never tried to own and assimilate the best that is in others. Still the worst feature of the present day situation is that extremely selfish and corrupt politicians are accepted and honoured as champions of religion and social culture. These champions of darkness first destroyed the cultural and spiritual bonds between the Hindus and Muslims resulting in the partition of the country, and now they are destroying the spiritual and cultural bonds between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The social philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh impels us to study all religions in their true spirit and show reverence for them all. The search for Truth which is one, and service of humanity which is one should bring religions and mankind closer to one another and weld them into one-world family. Guru Gobind Singh's life, his mission, and his social philosophy repeatedly remind us that Man is of one human race and the search for the light and love of God is universal quest in which all paths lead towards one and the same goal and all people march as comrades and not as enemies or rivals.<sup>46</sup>

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. St Gregory: *Morals in the Book of Job* Vol III p.575.
2. Kapur Singh: *Parasharprasnan The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 142-3.
3. Puran Singh: *The Spirit Born People*, 139-40.
4. Duncan Greenless: *The Gospel of The Guru Granth Sahib*, p.213.
5. *eh tisar mazahab Khalsa upjo pardhana*. 16: 12 line  
*ion tisar panth racaion vad sur gahela*. 16: 19
6. Bhai Gurdas II  
Trilochan Singh: *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*: Paper read in "Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla and published by the Institute in: *"Sikhism and Indian Society,"* 1966.

## APPENDIX

### ARDASA: INVOCATORY AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

*Ek Omkar: Vah-Guru ji-ki Fateh*

One God pervadeth all.  
Victory ever is of the Wondrous Lord.  
May the Glorious Sword Supreme ever come  
to our aid.

Remember and invoke first  
the grace of the Supreme Sword:<sup>1</sup> Almighty God.  
And in inward contemplation,  
fix your mind on Guru Nanak;  
Then in worshipful remembrance<sup>2</sup>  
think of Guru Angad and Amar Das.  
May the divine Ram Das aid us with his grace;  
Remember Arjan, Hargobind and the Holy Hari Rai,  
Remember Venerable<sup>3</sup> Hari Krishan,  
Seeing whom all sorrow and suffering depart.  
Remember Guru Tegh Bahadur, contemplating whom  
one receives the nine treasures<sup>4</sup> of human blessings.  
He, the Lord, helps and aids with His grace everywhere,  
May the tenth true King of Kings, Guru Gobind Singh  
help us with grace abounding in all places.  
Concentrate on Guru Granth, the Visible Embodiment  
of all the ten Gurus,  
the Living Presence of the Revealed Word:

Say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the  
Lord.

Remember the Five Beloved Ones,<sup>5</sup>  
 Remember the Four divine Princes;<sup>6</sup>  
 And the forty liberated ones.<sup>7</sup>  
 Remember those who remained steadfast in Faith,  
 Who lived in remembrance of God,  
 Who suffered in austere dedication,  
 Who contemplated His Name  
 And shared their earnings with others.  
 Who fed the hungry with food,  
 Who protected the weak with the Sword,  
 Who condoned and forgave the transgressions of others.  
 Reflecting on their moral greatness,

Say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Remember those men and women of the Khalsa Panth,  
 Who sacrificed their life for *dharma* (Faith and Truth)  
 Who suffered every limb of their body being cut joint by joint<sup>8</sup>  
 Who were broken on the wheels,  
 And were tortured and skinned alive;<sup>9</sup>  
 Remember those great martyrs,  
 Who were sawn from head to foot alive;<sup>10</sup>  
 Who were thrown into the boiling cauldron;<sup>11</sup>  
 Who suffered their scalp being dismembered.<sup>12</sup>  
 And remained unshakeable in their Faith unto the last.  
 Remember those brave Sikh women,  
 Who suffered untold oppression in Mir Mannu's prison.  
 Who starved and suffered under forced labour,  
 And saw their little children cut to pieces  
 and flung savagely into their laps.<sup>13</sup>  
 Yet none abandoned their Faith,  
 But upheld the dignity of Sikhism unto the last breath.  
 Recollect and think of their immortal achievements,

And say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Remember the Four Thrones (*Takhats*)  
the Seats of Political sovereignty of the Khalsa;  
Remember all the sacred historical shrines.

And say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

First we pray to Thee Lord,  
On behalf of the *Sarbat Khalsa*:  
The Common Wealth of Enlightened Ones  
May the Khalsa ever enshrine,  
The Holy Name of God in their hearts,  
And thus achieve all happiness,  
Wherever exists the Khalsa  
May he ever get Thy Protection and Grace.  
Lord, bestow on the Khalsa:  
The prosperity of *Degh*: the Cauldron of never diminishing Food  
And *Tegh*: the Sword of unconquerable sovereignty.  
May the Khalsa Panth be ever victorious.  
May the Almighty Sword of God,  
Ever come to our aid.  
Invoking the glory of the Khalsa Panth,

And say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Lord, give to the Sikhs:  
the gift of charity,  
the gift of sanctity of hair,  
the gift of disciplined life,  
the gift of tolerance and trust,  
the gift of all gifts: the Divine Name.



and the gift of ambrosial ablution  
and glimpse of divine Presence at Amritsar.  
May the abiding Centres of Khalsa legions,  
And the Khalsa flag of Freedom and Justice  
Ever remain upheld from age to age.  
May Victory ever be of *dharma* (righteousness)

And say Khalsa ji: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vah-Guru, Vah-Guru*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Lord, grant to Thy Sikhs a humble mind,  
Grant to Thy Sikhs high thinking Wisdom,  
May God Himself be the Light of our thoughts.

O Lord God,  
Saviour of the Destitute,  
Hope of the fallen,  
Our True Father:

Grant us this day. ....

..... (any special supplication)

Lord, our True King, forgive our transgressions,  
Extend Thy Helping Hand to all men,  
Give us the company of such beloved friends,  
Meeting whom we may remember Thy Name.

May the Spirit of Guru Nanak,  
And the holy Name of God,  
Inspire and exalt our mind and soul  
With ever increasing divine confidence and hope.  
Lord, we seek Thy Will ever to prevail,  
For the good of all human beings we pray.

*(The whole congregation prostrates before the Holy Book, thereby expressing humility, reverence and dedication to the Word of God, of which the Holy Book, Guru Granth, is a Living Embodiment. The congregation stands up again and*

*recites the supplementary invocation, which is confirmation of the faith of the Sikhs in Adi Granth as the Eternal Guru. This supplementary Invocation also constantly reminds the Sikhs that they are ordained by God to be free and sovereign nation.)*

### Supplementary Invocation

God expressed His Will as Command,  
Then was the Khalsa Panth ordained,  
My parting command to all my disciples is this:  
Accept the *Granth* as the Eternal Guru.  
Believe the *Guru Granth* to be  
The visible body of all the ten Gurus.  
He whose heart is chaste and pure,  
Will find divine revelation in the Word of God.

The Khalsa shall be free and sovereign and will rule,  
No one will ever dare to resist this Nation's mighty power.  
After suffering from internal conflicts all shall unite.  
He alone shall be saved who takes refuge in Him.

*The congregation again prostrates before the Holy Book, and when they get up they utter the following Greeting of dedication and Victory:*

Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa,  
Vah-Guru ji ki Fateh.

The Khalsa is dedicated to the Wondrous Lord,  
Victory ever is of the Wondrous Lord.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

(The Word *Ardasa* is the Punjabi form of the Persian word *Arz-dashtan* which means, to bestow veneration or offer supplication. In Sikhism Invocatory prayer of the individual and the Congregation is called *Ardasa*. All Sikh rites and ceremonies begin and end with this *Ardasa*.)

1. **Bhagauti**: lit: sword, symbol of divine Power, Almighty God. An attributive Name of God in the Writings of Guru Gobind Singh.
2. **dhlyaiai**: contemplate, worship, meditate.

3. **Sri:** venerable, glorious.
4. **nau niddha:** lit, nine treasures, all blessings of material and spiritual life.
5. **Five Beloved Ones:** Those who were first ordained as the Khalsa Elect. (1) Bhai Daya Singh. (2) Dharam Singh. (3) Sahib Singh. (4) Himat Singh. (5) Mohkam Singh.
6. **Four divine Princes:** The four sons of Guru Gobind Singh. The two elder sons Ajit Singh age 18, Jujhar Singh aged 16, died fighting in Chamkaur Battle, where forty Sikhs including the two Princes were ambushed treacherously. Both of them died fighting. The two younger sons Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, aged 8 and 6 respectively, were first tortured and then bricked alive by the Governor of Sirhind in December 1705 A.D.
7. **Forty Liberated Ones:** All the forty from Majha died fighting in the battle of Muksar for the honour of the Sikh faith, in 1706 A.D.
8. **Bhai Mani Singh,** an outstanding Apostle who was one of the two leaders during the lifetime of Guru Gobind Singh and for 26 years after his death, was treacherously trapped and imprisoned along with 25 others. His body was ordered to be cut from every joint. He was 90 years old when he fell a martyr on June 24, 1734.
9. **Twenty-five Companions of Bhai Mani Singh:** They were tortured in the most inhuman way. Some were broken on the wheel, some were skinned alive; some were cut to pieces and killed by slow torture. Bhai Mani Singh's brother Jagat Singh, and his two sons, Chitra Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh were among the 25 who fell martyrs on June 24, 1734 at a place in Lahore called Shahid Ganj.
10. **Matl Das** the Diwan of Guru Tegh Bahadur fell a martyr along with the Guru at Chandni Chowk, Delhi. He was sawn alive from head to foot: on November 11, 1675 A.D.
11. **Bhai Dayal Das:** He also fell a martyr along with Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was thrown into a boiling cauldron, and thus tortured to death.
12. **Bhai Taru Singh** a young Sikh peasant of 24 years of age suffered martyrdom on the orders of Zakariya Khan. The scalp of the head of Taru Singh was removed along with his hair. He died five days later on July 1, 1745; but it so happened that his tormentor suddenly fell ill, and could not pass his urine, and died about four hours before Taru Singh passed away.
13. **Sikh Women prisoners of Mir Mannu:** Mir Mannu the Mughal ruler of Punjab let loose a reign of terror and slaughtered every Sikh at sight. He captured thousands of Sikh women and children and subjected them to terrible tortures and suffering. Besides putting them on hard labour and minimum food of half a chapattie, he cut their little ones to pieces and threw them into their laps to unnerve them. But they remained steadfast in their faith and all died in prison. The Muslim Historian Alau-ud-din writes about the heroic spirit of the Sikhs that they used to say:

Mir Mannu is our sickle.  
We Sikhs are his grass blades  
The more he cuts us.

The more we grow,  
The Sikhs are still found  
In every hamlet and home.

**Ishrtnamah**

14. **Chardian kalan:** is a state of mind which is cheerful in sorrow and suffering and stoically optimistic even in the face of hopelessly critical situation. Having steadfast confidence in the ultimate Justice and Grace of God, the Sikh neither surrenders to despair nor to the terror of oppression.
15. These are the last words of Guru Gobind Singh recorded by a number of historians.
16. These are the prophetic words of Guru Gobind Singh spoken to his Poet Laureate Bhai Nand Lal. See page 101, 102 of this book:  
**Tankhahnama.**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### The Founders of Sikh Religion

(Chronologically)

**Guru Nanak** (1469-1539) was born on October 20, 1469 A.D. at Talwandi, Lahore, now in Pakistan. During his early life he disregarded Hindu rites and customs, and Muslim prejudices. He was working as a Granary Officer of the Viceroy of the Punjab when he felt profoundly inspired to carry his message to distant lands and civilizations. In his missionary journeys to the East he visited the Hindu and Buddhist centres as far as Assam and Sikhism. In the Middle East he visited Mecca, Medina and then went to Balkh, the home town of Zarathustra and from there on to Bukhara in Central Asia. He spent the last 20 years of his life to build the major institutions of his faith at Kartarpur where he passed away on 7th September, 1539. His Meditations, Discourses and Hymns comprise 974 verses which reveal him to be a great poet, scholar and linguist. He established his spirituality and religious and cultural independence on firm foundations and people started calling him and his successors *Sacha Patshah* (True King). The idea of Kingship and a prophet of vision were synthetically blended in his faith and fully evolved by his successors.

**Guru Angad** (1504-1552). Worshipper of Durga and Flame of Kangra, Angad, whose earlier name was Lehna, forgot all his gods and goddesses on meeting Guru Nanak at the age of 30. With his transmuting touch, Guru Nanak chiselled him in his own Spirit, disciplined him in the school of patience and endurance. Disregarding the claims of his sons, he chose him as his successor. Guru Angad devoted all the 13 years of his pontificate to strengthen the newly built Sikh

institution, to propagate the newly created Gurmukhi script of Punjabi language which is certainly older than modern Hindi script. He extended the facilities of education and training for higher social and cultural life to the down-trodden masses and low caste people, thus breaking the haughty exclusiveness and monopoly of Brahmins on divine knowledge. He passed away at the age of 48.

**Guru Amar Das (1479-1574).** After a patient and weary search Amar Das met Guru Angad at the age of 62, served him with energy and devotion for 11 years and became the third Guru of the Sikhs at the age of 73. He organized missionary work on a sound footing. In 22 dioceses, which he called *Subas* (provinces) corresponding with the Mughal provincial states. He appointed 146 well trained missionaries out of which 94 were men and 52 were women, all working on the delegated authority of equal status and equal responsibilities. Guru Amardas introduced such radical reforms that he struck at the roots of both the Hindu and Muslim priestly class. He fought against the cruel custom of *Sati* and did not allow any woman to be burnt with her husband. He encouraged widow marriage and elimination of purdah, the veils. Starting composing hymns at the age of 73, he wrote 907 divine songs bubbling with youthful fervour. He died at the age of 94.

**Guru Ram Das (1534-1581).** Ram Das, the young son-in-law of Guru Amar Das became the fourth Guru of the Sikhs. Adept in music and poetry he introduced new *Ragas* (musical modes) and poetic expressions such as parallelism and Walt Whitman style free verse, maintaining however the internal rhythm in 679 hymns which he has contributed to *Adi Guru Granth*. He founded the city of Amritsar, caused a pool to be dug in the centre of which he laid the foundation of a shrine, which his son Guru Arjan later completed into what is now known as the Golden Temple. Guru Ram Das set up an important missionary centre at Agra, the Mughal capital, under the great poet philosopher Bhai Gurdas, and Sikhism spread by rapid strides in North India during this period. He died at the young age of 47.

Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 A.D.) was a born poet, a practical philosopher, a powerful organiser and a great statesman who excelled everyone of his predecessors in the gifts which required building up a State. As builder of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the compiler of the Sikh scripture, *Adi Granth* and author of highly artistic and literary creations, he stands unique in Indian history. The outstanding features of Guru Arjan's life were his utter humility, his fearlessness, his refusal to submit to tyranny and his emphasis on the spirit of self-less service. He had not only numerous friends among the Muslims like the Qaidriya Sufi Saint Mian Mir, but also ideological opponents like the Naqshbandi Revivalist Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi. Amongst the Hindus he had political opponents like Birbal of Delhi and Chandra Shah of Lahore. These Hindu and Muslim courtiers misguided Jahangir and involved him in the battle of succession and the Emperor rashly ordered the Guru's death by torture. Thus Guru Arjan suffered martyrdom on 30th May, Friday, 1606 A.D. at Lahore.

**Guru Hargobind (1595-1644).** After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, Emperor Jahangir realized that he had been misguided and his mind poisoned against the Sikh Gurus. His relations with Guru Hargobind were generally peaceful, which enabled the young Guru to raise an army to remain in defence preparedness and to build *Akal Takhat*, the seat of political authority of the Sikh community. The Guru's enemies again raised alarm and he was imprisoned in Gwalior for about six months. After his release the relations between Jahangir and Hargobind remained amicable till the former's death; but Shah Jahan after coming to the throne sent armies against him four times, and in all the four battles the Mughals were badly defeated. "Thus, after Hargobind, the Sikhs were in little danger of relapsing into the limited merit of utility of monks and medics." (Cunningham: *Sikh History* p 54.) Not only was it made clear to them that worldly pursuits were quite compatible with the deepest religious spirit and highest piety and to bear arms in defence of their homes and faith was a paramount duty but also their continued success had made them realize their own power and the weakness of the Mughal government. This war-

rior Guru sat in meditation for five days continuously in a room before he left his body in *Samadhi* on 3rd March, 1644 at the age of 49.

**Guru Hari Rai** (1630-1661 A.D.). Called upon to lead the Sikhs and carry the torch of Sikh faith at the tender age of 13, Guru Hari Rai cautiously avoided conflict with the bigoted Aurangzeb and the quarrelsome and selfish Hindu Chiefs of Shivalik. Befriended and admired by Dara Shikoh, for long the Viceroy of the Punjab, he consoled the prince even during his most difficult hours. Sarmad, the Jewish Saint was also his friend and admirer. He reorganized the missionary work inside and outside the Punjab and placed the religious and cultural wings of Sikhism on firm foundation in all the centres.

**Guru Hari Krishan** (1656-1661 A.D.). He was called upon to lead the Sikhs at the age of five. Gifted and inspired by divine Power he baffled the Pundits by his knowledge and spiritual powers. He fearlessly disregarded the occult powers of his elder brother who had secured Emperor Aurangzeb's patronage. He went to Delhi when persuaded by Raja Jai Singh Mirza, but avoided meeting the Emperor. He spent all his days looking after those who suffered from smallpox and cholera, and tended them with healing words and touch. When the suffering of the poor and destitute became unbearable he took upon himself the sorrow and agony of the poor and the destitute and died at the young age of eight. Delhi still remembers him as Bala Pir or Bala Guru (the Child Prophet).

**Guru Tegh Bahadur** (1621-1675). Born on April 1st, 1621, Guru Tegh Bahadur spent the first 21 years of his life under the guidance and discipline of his warrior father, Guru Hargobind, and fought in the battle of Kartarpur at the age of 14. Then he spent 20 years in Elected Silence and intense meditations at Bakala, near Amritsar. The mantle of Guruship fell on him after the death of Guru Hari Krishan. He went to the East as far as Bengal and Assam to revive the centres of Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak, and then South as far as Puri in Orissa. The terror of Aurangzeb drove the lovers of poetry, music and freedom away from Delhi and many sought asylum under the



patronage of the Guru. In 1675 Guru Tegh Bahadur championed the cause of the severely persecuted Brahmins telling their leaders to declare to Aurangzeb that if he succeeded in converting Tegh Bahadur all the Hindus would accept Islam. Guru Tegh Bahadur thus laid down his life for the freedom of worship of the Brahmins whose doctrines and practices he did not accept. He was beheaded on November 11th, 1675 A.D. Thus Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for the morally and spiritually civilized future of human society, which through such suffering and sacrifices as his, was bound to learn reverence for life, reverence for universal ideals and human respect for all institutions and cultures aspiring for the highest truth and enlightenment.

**Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708)** Guru Gohind Singh was born at Patna on December 26th, 1666. He came to the Punjab with his father in 1671 and he was only nine when his father sacrificed his life for the freedom of worship of the oppressed. He received the best education the times could provide. Between 1680-1694 the Hindu Chiefs of the Shivalik Hill States (16 of the 22 states) led by Bhim Chand of Kahlur treacherously and repeatedly attacked Guru Gohind Singh and lost all the 15 battles they fought with him, and yet the Guru did not occupy an inch of their territory which he easily could. When they helplessly appealed to Aurangzeb, he sent Crown Prince Muazzam with an army of five lakhs but on enquiry he found that it were the Hindu Rajas who were trouble makers. He did not attack and he was able to convince his father that peace was the wisest step, and thus he became the Guru's friend and continued to be a friend to the last days of the Guru.

On March 30, 1699, at the annual Baisakhi gathering, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa Holy Order, the details of which are given in chapter 3 of this book. Four years later the Hindu Chiefs again made a desperate attack on Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh's residence, which was now well fortified, but the Guru proved too strong for them. In 1704 Anandpur was besieged by the collective forces of 16 Hindu States, and the armies of Sirhind and Lahore States. The number is generally given as nearly one million. Failing to cow down the

Guru, Aurangzeb sent peace offers signed on the Koran offering to settle everything by talks, for which he assured safe conduct to some place of meeting. As soon as Guru Gobind Singh came out of the City, the heseigers who had withdrawn to a considerable distance treacherously fell upon the Sikhs. With two of his elder sons and forty Sikhs the Guru fought the Mughals all day. Both his sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh died fighting. At night the Guru battled through the enemy line and reached beyond the enemy's reach by daybreak. His mother and two younger sons were betrayed to the Nawab of Sirhind by their Brahmin servant. They were all tortured to death. The sons Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, aged nine and six respectively were bricked alive. Aurangzeb appears to have repented, although Guru Gobind Singh condemned him roundly for breaking his oaths, and told him that his oaths on the Koran were worth trash. Guru Gobind Singh marched to Nanded in the South according to an earlier plan and established the fourth pontificate Throne of the Khalsa called the Takhat Hazur Sahib. He died on October 7, 1708.

Thus Guru Gobind Singh, by his sacrifices and creative genius made the labours and fruits of the whole Sikh movement secure. He cast the glowing ore of the Sikh philosophy and culture into the forms of ethical laws and made it tough as shining bronze. By giving a concrete shape to his grand plan of forming the Sikhs into a super national commonwealth, "he executed his designs" as Elphinstone observes, "with the systematic Spirit of a Grecian Law-Giver."

#### **The Four Sons of Guru Gobind Singh (Char Sahibzadas)**

**Ajit Singh:** eldest son was born at Paonta Sahib on January 1687. He fought a number of important battles at the young age of 13. He rescued a Brahmin girl from the clutches of Pathan of Bassi Bari by making a surprise attack on his fort. He died fighting in the battle of Chamkaur on 7 December, 1705 at the age of 18.

**Jujhar Singh:** second son of Guru Gobind Singh was born

in 1690 A.D. and died fighting in the battle of Chanakaur on 7 December, 1705, at the age of 16.

**Zorawar Singh:** the third son of Guru Gobind Singh was born on 18th November, 1696. He was tortured and bricked alive by the Nawab of Sirhind at the age of 9 on 12th December, 1705.

**Fateh Singh:** the fourth son of Guru Gobind Singh was born on 26th February, 1699, and was bricked alive along with Zorawar Singh on 12th December, 1705 A.D. at the age of 6.

### **The Panj Pyaras (The Five Beloved Ones)**

**The First Five who were initiated into the  
Khalsa Holy Order on March 30, 1699 A.D.**

1. **Bhai Daya Singh:** son of Maya Ram and Sobha Devi, a Kshatriya family from Lahore.
2. **Bhai Dharam Singh:** son of Param Sukh and Ananti of Hastinapur (Delhi). Agriculturalist by profession.
3. **Bhai Himat Singh:** son of Mal Deo and Lal Devi, washer men of Puri in Orissa.
4. **Bhai Mohkam Singh:** son of Jagjiwan Ram and Sanibhali from Dwarka in Kathiawar, tailors by profession.
5. **Bhai Sahib Singh:** son of Gurnarayan and Anukampa Devi from Bider in Central India, a barber by profession.

### **Other Apostles**

1. **Bhai Budha** (Contemporary of Guru Nanak who lived with the Founder of the Religion for the last 20 years of the founder's life, and was the Master of Ceremonies for the first six Gurus. He died during the lifetime of Guru Hargobind at the ripe age of about 135.
2. **Bhai Gurdas:** nephew of the third Guru, he was born in 1552. Along with Guru Arjan he compiled the Adi Guru Granth. He is the Father of Sikh Philosophy. His *Vars* in

about 40 Cantos of about 20-30 verses each give the metaphysical and social philosophy of the Sikhs. His *Kabit Swaiyas* (about 550) give the Mystical Experiences of Sikhism. Guru Arjan called his Writings the Key to *Adi Granth*. Next to the Gurus, he and Bhai Budha were the most revered personalities. The Gurus treated them as equals, while they remained the humblest disciples. He died in the year 1632.

3. **Bhai Gurdas II:** He was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh and lived up to the time of Banda's rise. He has written one *Var* (Canto) on the Tenth Guru which is of great historical significance.
4. **Bhai Nand Lal:** During his early life he was Mir Munshi of Crown Prince Muazzam, and then Naib Subedar of Multan. He gave up the services of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and became disciple and Poet Laureate of Guru Gobind Singh. A great Persian scholar who has left us 9 Persian Works giving exposition of Sikhism in Sufi terminology. He played the role of a Peacemaker and diplomat between Guru Gobind Singh and Prince Muazzam, later Bahadur Shah. Also see Translation of his *Rehatnamas* pages: 101, 102.
5. **Bhai Mani Singh:** See Appendix footnote 8 and 8, page 138.

# **Motor-Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act, 1976**

## **1976 CHAPTER 62**

An Act to exempt turban-wearing followers of the Sikh religion from the requirement to wear a crash-helmet when riding a motor-cycle.  
(15th November 1976)

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

**1.** In section 32 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 there shall be inserted after subsection (2) the following new subsection:—

“(2A) A requirement imposed by regulations under this section (whenever made) shall not apply to any follower of the Sikh religion while he is wearing a turban.”

**2.** This Act may be cited as the Motor-Cycle Crash-Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act 1976.



## A list of Sikh Missionary Society's Publications

1. Introduction to Sikhism.
2. Guru Nanak (for children).
3. The Guru's Way (for children).
4. In the Guru's Footsteps (for children).
5. Guru Arjan, the Apostle of Peace.
6. The Sikh Symbols.
7. The Sikh Bangle.
8. A Spur to the Sikh Youth.
9. Main Sikh Kion Han (Punjabi).
10. Rehni Rahe Soi Sikh Mera (Punjabi).
11. The Gurudwara (The Sikh Temple).
12. The Saint-Soldier.
13. Punjabi Teacher through English Medium.
14. Glimpses of Sikhism.
15. The Sikh Marriage Ceremony.
16. The Supreme Sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur.
17. The Sikh Woman.

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